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# VEDANTA KESARI

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## THE GREATNESS OF TRUTH

At the commencement of the exile for fourteen years Sri Rama was advised by a sophist named Jabala, at Chitrakuta, to discard his promise and return to his paternal kingdom. The spirited reply which Rama gave to his hedonistic arguments include the following:

निर्भयदिस्तु पुरुषः पापाचारसमन्वितः । मानं न लभते सत्तु भिनचारितदर्शेनः ॥  
 कुलीनमकुलीनं वा वीरं पुरुषमानिनप् । चारितमेव व्याख्याति शुचिं वा यदिवाशुचिम् ॥  
 कामवृत्तस्वर्यं लोकः कृत्स्नः समुपवर्तते । यद्वृत्ताः सन्ति राजानस्तद्वृत्ताः सन्ति हि प्रजाः ॥  
 सत्यमेवानुशंसं च राजवृत्तं सनातनप् । तस्मात् सत्यात्मकं राज्यं सत्ये लोकः प्रतिष्ठितः ॥  
 उद्विजन्ते यथा सर्पाश्राददृतवादिनः । धर्मः सत्यं पुरो लोके मूलं सर्वस्य चोच्यते ॥  
 सत्यमेवेश्वरो लोके सत्ये पदा प्रतिष्ठिता । संत्यमूलानि तंवाणि सत्यान्वासित परं पदम् ॥  
 अकुहः अहाधनः सन् कार्याकार्यविचक्षणः । कर्मभूमिभिर्म प्रायं कर्तव्यं कर्म यच्छुभम् ॥  
 धर्मेरताः सत्पुरुषैः समेताः तेजस्त्रिवो दानगुणप्रधानाः ॥  
 अहिंसका वीतमलाश लोके भवन्ति पूज्या मुनयः प्रधानाः ॥

A characterless, short-sighted person who is given to sinful ways and who does not keep to his honour, gains no respect from good people. Whether one is noble-born or base-born, pure or impure, really heroic or only pretending to be so—all that is explained by conduct alone. The generality of men go their way impelled by instincts and impulses. The conduct of the ruler is copied by the ruled. The abiding virtue of the ruler is indeed truthfulness and mercy. Veracity is therefore the soul of a State. Mankind is saved from chaos by truthfulness. Just as a poisonous snake is a horror, so is a liar. The supreme virtue, which is the basis of everything in this world, is proclaimed to be truthfulness. Truth alone is the Lord; and in the world prosperity depends on truthfulness. Everything is rooted in truth; there is not a single step higher than truth. Having born on this earth, meant for active work, one must do what is true and good with true faith and with skill, in discrimination between what ought and what ought not to be done, giving no room for any deceit. The foremost in the world, the sages, are worshipped everywhere—sages who delight in righteousness, to whom good men resort, who are wise and courageous, who are marked by bountifulness and who are harmless and who are free from the taint of evil.

— Valmiki's Ramayana, Chapter 109.

## THE VOICE OF FREEDOM

OUR new year begins with this number. *The Vedanta Kesari* has been in existence now for a quarter of a century; and at this juncture we should be happy to send our most cordial greetings to the contributors, subscribers and readers whose share in promoting the objective of the monthly, we feel a pleasure to recognize thankfully. We have before us a definite objective from the start, which cannot be altered by the changing trends of political or social events, even though vicissitudes of times may demand re-statements of it in language easily understood by people of a different generation or country. This is natural because the above objective refers more strictly to man rather than to the conditions he creates for himself. In adopting such a fixed ideal and attitude, we may claim to represent the voice of the ancient sages who discovered the saving truth that the seat of freedom and bliss is the Divine essence in man. With them, our care is to know and promulgate the truth of man, what in reality he is, and not so much how he acts. To the Rishis of old, being was more fundamental than doing, because the latter was a concomitant of the former. The spiritual culture of India is permeated with this spirit. The wisest of our race found real freedom and the goal of all striving in realizing the Divine essence, which is the real being of man; and for scores of centuries this has remained the end and aspiration of millions of people. A shining example of this spirit we find again in-

carnate in one whose memory is still green with us, and in whom we have a brilliant pattern and an inspiring guide. Hardly has our world witnessed a more brave struggle for freedom, a constant effort to be and never to seem, than in that life. Sri Ramakrishna has illuminated the whole vista of our past and has thrown a flood of light on our prospective path.

History is a phase in the grand process of spirit realizing Itself through time; this indomitable urge of the spirit is the impulse of freedom that cuts right through the evolutionary process of the sentient world. The moral, intellectual and spiritual expressions of human civilization are but a conscious attempt to actualize that latent urge for freedom in aesthetic form, because the essence of civilization is moral and spiritual beauty. The significant content of the Upanishads and other scriptures are but the articulation of that supreme urge for freedom. Krishna and Buddha, Jesus and Ramakrishna, have made concrete for us this conscious striving for, and realization of, that freedom. Freedom occupies the top of our scale of values. To attempt for that climax value, or to be of service to attain that value, is certainly a glory of human life. This is the bold basic concept of Vedanta.

Vedanta is the science of Reality, and at the same time the gospel of freedom. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Our title is a symbolic or poetic reminder of this quest of freedom. Vedantic texts and commentaries are

precious as vehicles of spiritual intelligence; but a historic or linguistic interpretation cannot engross our attention. Just as language does not live in books but in the people who use it, Vedanta too lives in those who understand and live it. Scriptures do not exhaust spirituality. The real importance of Vedanta lies in the fact that it refers to the ascending level of consciousness. It is the ground of all values and the rendezvous of ramified spiritual ways. All the various modes of knowledge—physics and metaphysics, geology and biology—are not unconnected with it, it being the supreme art of life. All that enlarge human understanding and add to the stature of man's spiritual personality come under the purview of Vedanta, so broadly conceived. Those who have read not merely the words of old texts but learned with faith and sympathy the lives of prophets and sages, cannot hesitate to accept this truth basic to the Vedantic scheme of knowledge.

In thus explaining the ideal suggested by the title, it would also be interesting to note, in passing, the significance of the second term briefly. *Kesari*, the lion, is the very embodiment of power and freedom. In a metaphorical sense a common noun is compounded with "lion" to emphasise excellency, especially heroism. It is quite appropriate therefore to call one a "lion" when he embodies the highest freedom along with its attendant virtues. In so far as *The Vedanta Kesari* stands for the ideal of freedom and heroism that is taught in our lofty scriptures and exemplified in the lives of the foremost sages, that name also becomes a fitting suggestion for the ideal it constantly keeps in view.

Freedom is what every organism constantly pants for, and it is always correlated with the idea of power, the source of which is knowledge. Freedom is the gift of power at all levels; the weak must be contented with their lot of bondage. The key-note of Vedantic teaching is therefore strength and fearlessness. Misery and weakness lay us low because we are foolishly bound to the destructive wheels of ruthless Nature. Truly has Matthew Arnold portrayed:

" In harmony with Nature "? Restless  
fool,  
Who with such heat doeth preach  
what were to thee,  
When true the last impossibility.  
To be like Nature strong, like Nature  
cool !—  
Know, man hath all which Nature  
hath, but more,  
And in that *more* lie all his hope for  
good.  
Nature is cruel; man is sick of blood:  
Nature is stubborn; man would fain  
adore:  
Nature is fickle: man hath need of  
rest:  
Nature forgives no debt and fears no  
grave:  
Man would be mild and with safe  
conceit blest.  
Man must begin, know this, where  
Nature ends;  
Nature and man can never be fast  
friends.  
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest  
her slave !

We are to pass Nature, and the voice of freedom calls us away from her slavery. Vedanta emphasises that *more* in which the hope for all good lies; and its one enterprise is to lead

a powerful crusade against the wily hosts of ignorance and impotence entrenched in the dark passions implanted in us by Nature and the blind circumstances that thwart and crush even the noblest and best ambitions and aspirations which ever beckon us, and to recover knowledge and power, freedom and mastery, which are our birthright.

To secure freedom from the meshes of Nature with the weapon of power forged on the anvil of Nature, is the end of one and all. Here it is necessary to note that the content of the term "freedom" is different to varying groups and individuals. Evidently it is dependent upon the sense of bondage one experiences; a schoolboy's freedom, an employee's freedom, a helot's freedom, a subject people's freedom and a saint's freedom are all conditioned by quite different sets of causes. Many a Dictator who has the power to mould like wax, opinions, environments, and men, and who ever enjoys the resultant freedom, has hardly the overruling passions of his heart under the dictates of that *more* in him. The noisy agitation for political, economic or social freedom with which every part of the globe simmers to day, is quite beyond the comprehension of a medieval visitor to our planet.

Take the case of the individual: there too the susceptibility to the pinch of slavery or consciousness of deadening limitation ranges very widely. Fear is the very antithesis of freedom, but it is a milestone on the road from inertness to freedom. As successive lairs of consciousness open up in the process of man's inner evolution, his conception of freedom widens more and more

until at last complete conquest of Nature internal and external, and the consequent enjoyment of the bliss of perfect emancipation, become the one idea that engages him. Then he begins to fulfill a new function in the world in which he is to take his place, and views all from an exalted spiritual altitude. The larger the number of people of this type a society could legitimately pride over, the farther advanced should that society be counted. Although this is the consummation of Vedanta it does not deny any of those urges for freedom that bubble up from the dark unfathomed depths of Nature rushing up for self-expression. Any struggle for freedom of some kind receives the sanction of the Vedantic teaching with the following restrictions: Let it not oust the whole from consideration by an over-emphasis on the part; let there be no delusion that liberty to give free reigns to one's impulses is the enjoyment of freedom; and let not one in any way infringe on others' freedom. Of the latter two considerations, the first one positively and woefully pulls back one from one's progress towards freedom, and the second can never give one a start towards that valued goal. The real manifestation of power and freedom is the direct result of the victory one gains over the undisciplined mind and thwarting environments. The nobler the man, the greater he feels obliged to others. A true wayfarer on the route to freedom never practises the doctrine 'might is right'.

Is real freedom a cross-current in the joyous course of unfettered natural life? Is it a prospective gift of which even a foretaste is not possible here? True, it crosses life if one

lives only on the surface, caring for nothing except its big games. But in fact the quest of freedom is neither an antithesis to life nor a blank pursuit, because it is the essence of our existence; if it were not so, it could never be the highest value. As an instrumental value, freedom is a remedy, and every means, according to time, place and agent, must be considered as an end to assure an effective result. But an unbiassed perception and standard are always needed to avoid complete deflection from the goal. Man has a graduated scale of physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual values to round off his existence fruitfully. They are all related as means and ends so much so he denies the one or the other at his own risk. Nevertheless we should not be prone to take the patient's diet to be the normal food. The cure for the evils of alien subjection is political freedom won by persons worthy to hold it without abusing it; economic freedom is an imperative need to straighten up the stunted national growth; the strong distemper of neurotic caste divisions can be eased only by giving freedom to society. But one should not forget that these are but adjustments which must come slowly or speedily in the succession of events. They have, as Marx has pointed out, a dialectic of their own, inherent in society. A practical religion or philosophy is not oblivious of those facts, although it has to function in a different sphere. A stagnant nation cannot produce spiritual heroes, who alone are the really free; and so every kind of freedom is welcome that will help to produce such men. They are the last word of "evolution," and few though they are—for they are

never a mass product—they shed a magnetic influence which will act as a leaven on any society.

It has been suggested that freedom is the gift of power, whether it be of the muscles and nerves or intellect and spirit; but the power of the demon tightens the relentless grip of Nature, while the power of the god hastens the progress to the highest freedom. The one is a nuisance to the world, the other a balm and a bliss. The Upanishads, in presenting the one over against the other, brings home to us one notable idea, namely, that freedom does not dwell in inertia. The strength that is invoked by the Vedantic religion is not that of the ape and tiger lodged in man. It is the strength of the divine type, a positive, constructive energy of the will and understanding—Vidyasakti — operating on the basis of a well laid-out personality. One who has an insight into the truth hidden in oneself and who cultivates assiduously the excellences and virtues of a higher life, such as purity, fearlessness, strength of will and the like, can alone hope to build such a personality. In the troubled waters of existence they are the captains of human destiny leading us to the haven of peace and safety. Their words and deeds edify, even when they have ceased to exist physically. The wisdom we need today to make our world a better place to live in, must be formulated in the light of their experience and counsel. Having got real freedom, they are full of compassion for the bound; their tenure of life is a ceaseless prayer for the happiness of every living thing. The soothing rays of their benign influence is ever on us, encouraging us to ascend to the heights

they have reached, to unfold the inner purity, knowledge and freedom which are ours always. In freedom alone there is happiness, and in a narrow limited mould freedom can never be cast. It has been, and will ever be, our endeavour to focus all light available from various sources, ancient

and modern, oriental and occidental, to the best of our capacity on this central problem of existence, and be a constant source of help for appraising in that light the social and spiritual values for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many.

## HOLY TALKS

BY SWAMI VIRAJANANDA

[His Holiness Srimat Swami Virajanandaji Maharnaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, arrived in Madras on the 20th of April, 1939. The following is the report of a conversation he held with devotees on 23rd of April at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.]

**Question:** Disappointments and sorrows of the past disturb concentration of mind. How can mind be controlled under such circumstances?

**Answer:** Disappointments and sorrows such as loss of honour, loss of relatives and so on break the peace of mind. They do come to every one. We can only try to minimise them, try to see that we do not get overpowered by them. Make yourselves so strong that you are not overwhelmed by them. The only way is to surrender yourselves to the Lord. Pray to Him that you may be strong enough to stand these. Find out what makes you feel so much depressed. By praying to the Lord, by taking refuge in Him, and by practising non-attachment you can conquer mental depression. Then, even if troubles come, they will not affect you. Pray to the Lord that you may be unattached to the world, and by and by you will get strength. Gradually you will find that you are strong enough not to be affected.

**Q:** Items of office work or household work intrude into the mind

during prayer and sometimes leave no time for prayer at all. Is there a way of combining efficient work with prayer?

**A :** You attend to office work or household work out of material needs. But there are spiritual needs also. You have made the material needs more urgent than spiritual needs. Material needs are more objective, while spiritual needs are felt only in our hearts. In spite of this difference, spiritual needs also have to be met. "Where there is a will, there is a way." The office work and household work exercise a sort of compulsion on you. Though you may not have any interest in them, you have to do them. But you know these needs are temporary and they pass away. Our real needs are spiritual needs, and so the more you interest yourselves with spiritual things, the more you will be devoting yourselves to them. The greater the interest in spiritual things, the less you will find other needs intruding on your thoughts. Later you will feel that the real need is spiritual.

If you have no time for practice, pray to the Lord to save you from encumbrances. Gradually, you will find that you are progressing in spiritual life.

Q : While praying we ask God for little things. Is it right or wrong?

A : God is our father, He is our mother. Why should you go to Him to pray for small things? Why should you pray for Mohars? Pray for Bhakti and Mukti. When there are higher needs, why should you pray for smaller things? If such thoughts come, then strengthen your minds with the thought, "There are higher things for me to pray for."

Q : Most Asuras like Hiranya Kashiipu got God-vision by their Tapas. But they became more wicked and oppressive afterwards, and they hated the Lord. Can Tapas or concentration of mind increase not merely virtues but vices also?

A : Tapas may help in doing good or bad according to temperament. It is just like science. Those things that the Asuras had in mind, they got. They prayed for power to rule the universe. Looking upon God as one's enemy is also a path of realising God. By becoming His enemies they had constant remembrance of Him.

Q : We observe defects in our character. Are we to pray for God-vision first or for a good character?

A : We have to pray to God to destroy bad intentions so that we may have good character. First pray to God, "O God, please destroy my evil propensities and make my mind turn towards You." Naturally then good nature, purity, holiness—all these things will come.

Q : By sitting in the presence of holy men does one's character get moulded? If so, to what extent?

A : When you sit before a fire you get heat. So the presence of holy men helps one in Realisation. Sri Ramakrishna used to lay stress on the efficacy of Sadhu Sangam for getting purity and Realisation. When you seek the company of holy men, you may not feel the change at once. But there is an unconscious influence, and you will feel that your worldly desire or your lower nature disappears by and by.

Q : If my Guru loves me all along, what extra help does he give me by formal initiation?

A : The love of a holy man is a great help no doubt. But by initiation he puts you on the right path, so that you may, by following his instructions, gradually become purer and purer. Also initiation gives great strength. You may follow some kind of religious path, but who knows you are not following a wrong method, a path that is not true? You may be practising for several years but you may not progress and you may not know that it is a wrong path. The Guru puts you on the right path and you will have the conviction that you are following the right path. When you find that this conviction is there—namely, that you are following the right path—strength will come; purity and calmness of mind will follow. You must have infinite faith in his words. Again in times of difficulties you can always refer to him and know how to get over difficulties. His words help you a good deal. In our everyday life we are seeking Gurus. Guru's help is necessary even for worldly things. Spiritual matters

are more subtle than any of the material matters and so the need is greater. Hence Guru's help is needed.

Q : Is there any danger in meditating in the Muladhara and the lower centres? What are the relative benefits of meditating in the heart and the head?

A : Learn these from the Guru. This is not for a public meeting.

Q : There are many Avatars. Which of them are we to choose? Which are we to follow?

A : That depends upon your natural bent of mind. Study the Avatars one by one; and you will be spontaneously drawn to some one of them. The Avatars come according to the needs of the time. One teaches Jnanam and another Bhakti. There is no real difference between one Avatar and another. They only lay stress on one thing or another according to time and circumstances. Find out the bent of your mind and follow that which suits you best.

Q : How to realise the Self?

A : By dispassion (Vairagya) and discrimination (Viveka), we know what is Self and what is not-self. Think of the Higher self, and the lower self vanishes.

Q : Swamiji said to Ramakrishna, "I want to be immersed in meditation and Samadhi throughout." But Sri Ramakrishna said, "Fie on you. For you there is a higher state than even Samadhi." What is that state?

A : His case was a special case. He belonged to the class of Acharyakotis—he was a born teacher of the world. Such world Gurus come for giving Mukti to thousands of souls and they do not care for their own salvation. So when Swamiji said that he liked to be always in Samadhi, Sri Ramakrish-

na said, "You are thinking of this paltry thing; you are like a huge banian tree and will afford shelter to thousands of weary souls." But that paltry thing is a great thing for us.

Q : After concentrating for sometime, the mind begins to wander. What alternatives are then to be tried?

A : As told in the Gita, we should constantly practise. Practice (Abhyasa) and dispassion (Vairagya) are needed. Contemplate often and have dispassion, else your mind will wander. If your mind is attached to hundreds of things, you cannot easily concentrate. If your mind is not attached to worldly things, you can concentrate easily. Practise constantly and do not give way to despondency. It is natural that your mind will wander, but still you should struggle. Spend some time in meditation every day. Your mind will gradually acquire skill in concentration. But you have to practise with infinite patience. Otherwise you cannot concentrate after practising for a few days or even a few months. It requires several years. You may be able to concentrate at first for one minute. This is itself a great achievement. And then you will be able to concentrate for 2 minutes, then 3 minutes, and so on. If you concentrate even for 2 minutes, it will help you immensely. Once I was feeling an urge to devote myself wholly to a life of concentration and meditation. At that time Swamiji pressed me to live a life of service, and rebuked me saying, "If you can concentrate for one minute, it is enough. Who can do it for 5 minutes at a time?" Practise concentration with regu-

larity and Nistha, even though it be for one minute or two minutes a day.

**Q :** What should we think of in meditation?

**A :** Think of the Lord—His qualities, His life, teachings, etc.

**Q :** Some people believe that mere repetition of God's name will give salvation. Is this quite true?

**A :** Yes, by repeating the name merely, you will think of His true nature by and by. There is a great power in the name of God. By constantly repeating the name you get something which makes you think of His inner nature. Constant repetition gives you concentration of mind or Bhakti. There is an inherent power in the utterance of the name mentally or by mouth.

**Q :** If the actions of our life are controlled by past Karma, then how can we overcome Karma? How to know our past Karma, in order to overcome it?

**A :** Our actions are no doubt controlled by the past Karma, but we are not mere machines. If we have no power to check our past Karma, there will be no Mukt. Again, you may be doing new Karma, but there is one thing which is above one's own previously acquired tendencies (Samskaras). There is the Self in us which can do and undo this Karma. You have to do good Karma and nullify past Samskaras. So exert your own power, and they will get attenuated. Do good works; they have power to overcome evil Karma, and you will feel you are prospering.

**Q :** If we do not know our past Karma, how to rectify ourselves?

**A :** Knowing our past Karma is not necessary. If you know all your past Karma, you will get mad.

**Q :** Are Bhakti and Jnana entirely separate paths? Or is each man to have a combined prescription of Bhakti, Jnana, Karma, etc., differences being only in the proportion for each?

**A :** Bhakti and Jnana, in their preparatory stages, are different. But afterwards they merge, and then it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. You should never think that because you are following Jnana or Bhakti, others following paths different from yours are mistaken. You should say, "This is my path, that is another's path." If, however, you have a harmonious development of all the paths, you will achieve an all-round life. The best thing is to harmonise all these paths into a form of discipline suited to your temperament. There must be one's own path, one's own discipline and Sadhanas, but one should also follow the general characteristics of other paths. Swamiji's ideal was to harmonise all these paths and not to follow only one to the exclusion of others. Follow your own path and absorb as much as possible from other paths. The best way of working is to work for others so that our selfishness may disappear.

**Q :** Why is it that some people get mad while practising religion? Is it due to unsublimated desires, or to misguided Pranayama, or to something inherent in the Mantras they take?

**A :** All these may lead to madness. If one does not follow the advice of the Guru properly, then he may get mad. So especially in practising Yoga, you must be strictly guided by the Guru's instructions. You must let him correct you. You must observe Shastras strictly. In Yoga you have

to follow a strict diet. If you practise Yoga without attention to these details, it may have an injurious effect on the nervous system. So Yoga practices are not suited to our present mode of living unless we control ourselves, practise Brahmacharya and possess other qualification. Otherwise you are sure to get your mind deranged.

**Q :** Some people see lights and hear sounds during concentration. What is one to do at such times—welcome them or ignore them?

**A :** It is better not to attach any importance to them. If they come try to discard them. Don't think they are big things and encourage them. Only follow the ideal and do not look for these experiences. Then they gradually disappear.

**Q :** If God is really in the hearts of everyone, why can He not lead everyone along the right path? Are we not His sons and daughters?

**A :** He can, and He will, if His sons and daughters recognise the Lord.

**Q :** If a vision comes, how is one to know that it is a genuine vision and not a mere imagination?

**A :** If the vision is pleasant and strengthening, then it is real. If the vision weakens you or leads to unpleasant results, then it is not real. That which is pleasant and strengthening is real. It must not also antagonise reason. If it is something that is not rational and is contrary to what is mentioned in Shastras or by the teachers, then it is false.

**Q :** Is search for Guru needed, or does a Guru come of his own accord?

**A :** It may happen both ways. If you have an intense desire, the Lord sends a proper Guru. If the Guru does what he professes, then you may

understand that he is a real Guru. If he is spiritually advanced, then you may accept him as your Guru and follow his instructions.

**Q :** Is God to be seen? Can we hear him also? If God is really spirit, are not the visibility and audibility of Him as of material things paradoxical?

**A :** Hearing or seeing God is in the consciousness. In spiritual consciousness you hear and see but that has got nothing to do with matter. It comes to your consciousness in that form, and there is nothing material in it. We can see God with the spiritual eye and not with the two material eyes. That third eye is developed by meditation. So also in the case of audibility, you get spiritual consciousness and hear the words of God. When you are intensely meditating, you have not the idea of the body or anything. But you may hear, see, and feel in that consciousness.

**Q :** Can Guru's grace act at a distance even in a case where the Guru and the disciple have not met at all. In other words, can one get a Guru by correspondence.

**A :** By correspondence you cannot know your Guru. That is something modern.

**Q :** Are Advaita, Vishistadvaita and Dvaita different paths leading to the same goal of realisation, or are they different rungs in the ladder of spiritual evolution?

**A :** They are different paths. But after reaching the goal one knows that all these paths lead to the same goal. Then a feeling of toleration comes and one knows that others are as good paths as one's own. From the highest goal you see that all converge to the same centre.

## THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING IN THE LIGHT OF VEDANTA

BY G. R. MALKANI

{Suffering, including death, is a vital problem of philosophy and religion in general. With a rare logical thoroughness the Vedantic system furnishes its explanation of the cause, nature and remedy of suffering. These are lucidly summarized in this paper by Professor G. R. Malkani, who is a well-known philosophic thinker and the present Head of the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner.—The Editors.]

SUFFERING is a patent fact of experience. The physical world is real to us. But even more real than it is the fact of suffering. We cannot escape from suffering of the one kind or another. It is automatically rejected by us. The moment we have any kind of suffering, we seek to escape from it. But this very effort to escape from suffering or to reject it gives suffering its reality and its sting. It makes suffering what it is. If we conceived a situation in which suffering was there but there was no resistance to it on our part, we should cease to suffer. It is our revolt against suffering that reacts upon us and makes us suffer. Resignation to suffering, which is so often advised by religion, has this much truth about it. It reduces suffering and in the end annuls it.

It may be that all is well with the world. If we took things in that spirit, we should not be worried and should not suffer. But our suffering is a fact. We somehow find ourselves in the midst of it. And being in it, we naturally seek to be free from it. This is the primary concern of all living beings. We may not have happiness. But at all costs, we must be free from suffering.

Can suffering be ended? Every one believes that it can be ended. But if suffering is real, how can it be

ended for good? Natural suffering comes naturally to an end. But it is invariably succeeded by another. We are heirs to suffering. We cannot be quite free from it. One suffering goes only to make room for another. We are helpless in a way. We have no means to end suffering for good.

Something can be ended for good only when it is not real but illusory. Can we, however, regard suffering as illusory? Vedanta says that it is nothing else. The prime cause of suffering is Avidya or ignorance of our true self. We mistakenly identify our self with the body. But once we take ourselves to be embodied, all forms of suffering follow. We can only suffer in the body. The pure spirit which is without a body is without suffering. It is in truth pure joy. Suffering comes only in the body; and this body is ours through mistaken identity or through ignorance. When this ignorance is dissipated, we are freed from the body and so freed from all suffering.

It might be thought that in this worldly existence, the self is really identified with the body; and if it is really identified, we cannot possibly escape from suffering until we die. This, however, is not the case. If the identity is real, even death cannot possibly end it. There is <sup>rp</sup>

reason why it should not recur. The identity may be broken only to be reconstituted again in another form; and there will be no end to this reconstitution. Death by itself is not a solution. It cannot remove all our troubles. The truth is that we are not *really* identified with the body. Our identity with it is due to lack of discrimination, it is due to our ignorance. Once this false notion of identity is removed through knowledge of the Self as pure, intelligent, immutable and unrelated, the identity comes to an end of itself. It is seen to be no possible fact. We have not to wait for death to release us from this identity. The identity is due to a false notion and it can only be really ended when the false notion is corrected. Release from all suffering is a matter to be achieved in life.

We have many forms of suffering in the body. But perhaps the most potent form of suffering is due to our fear of death. All other forms of suffering are *in the body*, and we feel certain that they are remediable in the body. If only the body lasts sufficiently long, and we have patience, every suffering might be healed. Our basic love of our self is not rudely shaken. But the suffering which comes to us in the fear of death is in a class by itself. There is no cure for this suffering as long as life lasts. It only increases, the longer we live. For death is inevitable. There is no escape from it. And it evidently dashes to pieces all that we cherish and all that we value in life. There is darkness in front of us, the darkness of an unknown beyond, in which we ourselves are lost. Our self-love receives the rudest shock.

Many people are quite unconscious of this form of suffering. They do not seem to fear death at all. They take life and its problems so earnestly that they have no time to give thought to the end of life. But this merely proves their complete engrossment in the body. They have not conquered the fear of death. They have merely laid it to rest. They have not sufficiently roused themselves to face the most implacable of all realities during our life in the body. It is the cause of a form of suffering which is the ground of all other suffering. All other suffering is in a way remediable, given life. There is no remedy against death. It is a suffering which is given to few. But it is the noblest, and both physically and spiritually, the most potent. It upsets all our values of life. Love of our self is our greatest love. Death is a challenge to it. Can we answer this challenge? Vedanta shows the way. We have falsely identified our self with the body. The self and the not-self are in their own nature quite opposed. They are so opposed as is darkness to light. We do not confuse these or identify them. And yet we identify the self with the not-self, and carry on our activities of life on the basis of this false identification. We must remove this ignorance; we must, through discrimination, realise the non-connection of the self with the body which is of the nature of the not-self; and we must realise that the self is in its own inherent nature immortal. The fear of death is due to our identification with the body. Can this fear survive when we have rejected the body, and seen it to be no better than a corpse with which,

through our ignorance, we are claiming identity?

Death is distant. It does not bother us. We do not seem to have any suffering on its account. What seems undeniably real to us is our present suffering in the body. Can this suffering be illusory? Can we say that we do not suffer? Indeed, we do not say it. But still we mean it. We cannot conceive any suffering which is not in the body. There may be purely mental suffering, although we do not know what it will be like. But even this suffering will take the form of a certain mental state. This mental state is not the self. It is attributed to the self. It is said to belong to the self. The self is not the same thing as suffering. It remains self-identical through every mental state. It remains absolutely the same *in* suffering as it was *before* it. It remains unmodified and unaffected by any passing state. Can we say that the self *really* suffers? If it really suffered, it would not have the consciousness of suffering. It would have no sense of either suffering or of release. But if that is so, is not suffering really illusory? The self that does not suffer is believed through ignorance to have suffering. We have falsely identified the self with what is not the self.

We shall go further. Suffering is naturally disliked. It is rejected, not wanted. This is because it is opposed to the nature of the self which is one of bliss. The feeling of self-fulfilment is the basis of all suffering. There is the bliss of the

self even while we suffer. Our suffering would not be possible without it. It implies it.

It may be said that when I suffer, I do not feel happy or joyful at the same time. This is no doubt true in a certain sense. I do not have, at the time of suffering, a feeling of joy which would be incompatible with the feeling of suffering. But the joy which do have is not a matter of feeling. It is part of the very nature of the self, it is the essential joy of being. It comes out in our self-love which is not affected by any amount of suffering. My self is the highest object of love to me. I can never desire to lose my self or to cease to be my self. I desire above all to be my self. Other things, including the cessation of suffering and actual happiness, I desire for the sake of my self. I do not desire the self for the sake of anything beside it. Our love of it alone is unconditioned, absolute or *nirupadhi<sup>ka</sup>prema* as it is called. The joy of the self is not broken by suffering; it is evidenced by it.

If what we have said is true, then suffering is not real. What is real is the bliss of the self. We suffer, because we are not conscious of our true nature; and we accept for ourselves, through ignorance, a mixed nature, part matter and part Spirit. It is only as embodied self that we have suffering. But when we have distinguished and dissociated ourselves from the body, we have put an end to all suffering. We conclude that suffering can be cancelled or ended for good, because it is illusory.

## INDIAN MYTHS

BY PROF. HEINRICH ZIMMER

[Dr. Zimmer, Professor of Sanskrit in the Heidelberg University, is a very distinguished Indologist of Europe. The following article is an abridgment of his illuminating and suggestive monograph on Indian myths in German. The English rendering is by Mr. P. Seshadry Iyer, B.A., M.L. of Trivandrum.—The Editors.]

INDIAN myths are very obscure. They seem to have had a past, no longer known, from which they have derived their meaning. What can now be learnt from them is that they have been recently stamped with a new meaning fit for the new epoch and show a turning point in their wanderings through time. Of course, there are other myths which have no secret behind, the meaning of which in their very origin could be grasped. But though they have apparently no perceptible past and seem not to have led to any future, they remain as relics of changed meanings.

From the time of the *Vedas*, there have been in Brahmanic India customs in full swing, which make a boy arrive at the status of a man; the beard is for the first time shaven and the boy who had hitherto roamed naked obtains a man's clothing. The Gods themselves present it to him to cover his nakedness. Regarding this, a myth tells why man stands in need of dress and the Gods send it to him. Man is in India a created being like any other—not an animal among animals because he can see further than they—but he is no unique image of the Divine as Adam is. Hence, is it surprising that he alone among all creatures wears clothing not provided for by Nature? This peculiarity has its history which is thus explained by the myth. What is now the skin

of the cow was originally that of men. The Gods said to the pastoral Aryans: "The cow, in sooth, sustains all here. We wish to lay the skin of men on the cow. Thanks to that, it will be able to endure rain, hoarfrost and heat." They then took off the skin of man and laid it on the cow. It is because of this that it is able to endure rain, hoarfrost and heat. Unskinned truly is man. Therefore it is that, when reed-grass or something else cuts him, blood always comes out. Then they put clothes on him. So no creature other than man wears clothes. Hence certainly shall he endeavour to be finely dressed. No more shall he be naked before the cow. Since the cattle know that they wear the skin of men, they disperse in fright, thinking that men may take back the skin. Such myths without any veil are innumerable throughout the world. They explain why and how the things took place. They have their history which we have to discover by intuition. Our surmise is valid if it makes many things plausible and probable. This myth explains what is not said here—why the skin of the cow, the hide, is so thick; it is indeed peculiarly doubled. For it is not said that the cows were without any skin when the Gods for the sake of the cows took away the skin of men. What is stated is merely that the all-nourishing cow

should be protected better than other creatures.

Thus the myths of the Brahmanas of the Vedas, in the beginning of Indian tradition, serve to explain nature and humanity. Imaginative and rationalistic at the same time, they trace the existence of things to their particular origin. The priestly omniscience of the time asserting that offerings and prayers can conjure, constrain, curse, bewitch, heal and rule over all living beings, powers, creatures and things with a similar living personality, has its basis in myths. The result of the magic rites confirms their practical value; the myths explain the coherence and the characteristics; they form the theoretic element. The myth gives a sense of assurance to the traditional practice of the customs and explains their origin; it gives them certainty through knowledge or appearance of knowledge of the secrets of the powers which are at play. It confirms the magical technique as our science attests the rational. Further, it certifies their procedure and its wisdom through their derivation from the Gods. Earlier than men, the Gods had recognised, known and performed these rites. They are the great magicians, the models of the Gods on earth—the Brahmins—who had learnt from them the all-powerfulness of the charms and now freely presume even to constrain the Gods.

Valid customs come from the Gods and the myths trace their origin from them. Fire had the power to carry the dead heavenward to a blessed life amongst the Gods. A blessed Gandharva—who else could do it?—

presented the fire in days of old to a King.

A heavenly damsel had associated with the King in love; her embrace was his heaven on earth. But the supermundane immortals envied the superhuman luck of the mortal. With set purpose they arranged so that the damsels saw her lover naked, as he was, an unclothed man; so she had to leave him and march to heaven. He however went in pursuit of her. In the end, he found her, but she refused his request. After sometime she came back once more to comfort him, gave him the son she had borne him, taught him to pray to the Blessed round the fire and told him how his son through the fire offering could help him after death to heaven where he will again find her and be with her for ever. But the King lost the fire which the heavenly damsel had given him. Then was he taught to produce it anew with twirling stick and piece of wood. And twirling stick and wood, whose friction brings about the fire of eternal life, were named after the lovers, as the son of their union, whose fire-offering gave eternal life to the father, —it was named Ayus, the power of life.

In the magical priest-lore, these rational myths served to explain the heavenly origin of fire which was pressed from wood, to create a belief in its wonderful efficacy and to show the origin of the name of firewood. But an ancient song in the Hymns of the Vedas gives a deeper meaning to this matter. When the heavenly damsel forbade her lover to follow her to renewed fellowship, she spoke thus: “I have stayed with the mortals and was united to you night,

after night for three years and have partook of the unique butter during the day and still have not been satisfied thereby".

An abyss separates Gods from men—death or destruction. And no willed darkness of favourable night can secure lasting companionship between the boundlessly different beings. A flash of the heavenly light on the lovers had the misfortune to bring to the light of day the dissimilarity of the couple. From the mouth of the beloved herself the man learnt the limits of his human nature and a possible victory through the magic of a Sacrament.

"So speak the Gods to thee: thou art related to death. Thy descendants shall make offerings to the Gods and thou thyself shalt be blessed in Heaven." In this hymn we find the old myth full of melancholy renunciation and consolation to the faithful. In it rests an exalted parting-look of men to the past possibilities of the first mythical ages of the world, when men as priests and kings, helpers and companions of the Gods, were fighting for the preservation of the world-order, and when the high among them with the power of the seer and the nature of a hero were the comrades of the Gods in heaven and the heaven-dwellers truly visited the huts of men. That age is irretrievably gone—this is the sense of the song. Magic and sacrament sent by the Gods and the belief therein alone inform the latter generation of a bridge over the abyss between heaven and earth. The poet of the songs of this old myth of the heavenly damsel and the mortal man stamps this meaning; no one can venture to say that it is its original sense. It is only, so far

as our tradition reaches, the earliest explanation of the sense, a reading of the old hieroglyph in India. Elsewhere it has antique relations with other old meanings.

It is manifestly the poets, the true poets alone, as those of the old hymns, not ritual teachers or piece-writers, who can give a glorious life to changing myths—bird-free as they are with all the past spiritual heritage. Their world-feeling or sense of nature, their function to be the mouth-piece of the vicissitudes of man can enliven with the stamp of new meaning the motive-web that lies always ready. They tear the secrets from the dim and dark forms in which they are hidden. Their experiences reveal the soul of the time. Then the myth grows up and the fate of man along with it to formful lives—then comes the myth out of half light and stupor to clear light and shine—as bearer of a high meaning, and the formless feeling of the poets finds in it the matter to incarnate.

A thousand years later, some centuries before the beginning of the Christian Era, we find the old myth in the hands of the Buddhist monks. Meanwhile, it had changed its old form, then unreadable, and become a fictitious tale. The ugliest Indian Prince married the most beautiful princess. She is a Goddess in a human form; there is only discord between the pair. She could not bear his sight and fled away from him till a miracle happened and the godly beauty possessed by him from the beginning took the place of the disparity and the ugliness. The role is changed; at the core both are gods.

But the myth has become a miracle story from which one can scarcely

understand the inner meaning—at least as transformed by the Buddhist monks who took it up. It would have been well if a poet had utilised it. But the monks laid hold of it as it was in swing—flat and dull—and employed it, poor in sense and childish, poorer than when it was used by the ritual priest of olden days, in the embroidery of the Buddha legends. The Prince was the Buddha in a former life, and a slight change made the story rhyme in with an adventure of Buddha in his previous existence. Here the

myth lived even farther from its inner sense, closed to a possible deep meaning behind its obscure texture.

More than two thousand years later, as in the beginning of the visible period of tradition, a poet—Tagore—in his "King of the Dark Chamber" seized it and treated it not as of old as the story of a mortal king of bygone times but represented the king as a prototype of the Gods, and the beloved, the goddess of old, as the soul of men.

## GURU NANAK: MONISM TRANSLATED INTO LIFE

BY S. K. MAITRA, M.A., Ph.D.

[Sikhism stands for loyalty and sacrifice. Its founder translated into daily life the full implications of a monistic philosophy. His teachings, when truly understood and practised, is potent enough to build a united India, in which one shall no more hear about communal skirmishes. Professor Maitra throws much light on the excellences of the faith and the greatness of its founder in this article.—The Editors.]

THE greatness of Guru Nanak lies not so much in the fact that he founded a new religion as in the fact that he created a new nation. There was nothing strikingly original either in his conception of God or in any other religious conceptions of his. What he did was to gather together all the threads of the great monistic upheavals, of which the great leaders were Namadeva, Ramananda and Kabir, and the roots of which go to very ancient times, to the age of the Vedas and the Upanishads themselves.

But the originality of Guru Nanak lay in what he made of this monism, which we may regard as the greatest heritage of our country. He applied it to all departments of life, and was not contented to consider it as a mere

logical or metaphysical doctrine. It is thus that he succeeded in creating a new nation. The fact can never be too strongly emphasized, that there is a world of difference between holding the monistic doctrine as a metaphysical concept and accepting it as a living principle to be applied to all departments of practical life. As the history of our country has shown only too well, it is possible to hold the Advaita doctrine and regard all differences as illusory, and yet at the same time cling to those very differences which the metaphysical doctrine denies. It is possible, in fact, to be metaphysically an absolute monist and practically an almost equally absolute dualist or pluralist.

This distinction between the domains of theory and practice has in fact been the bane of our culture. It has acted as a kind of opiate which has prevented many eminent religious teachers and philosophers from perceiving that there is any inconsistency in holding, in the domain of pure thought, the loftiest conceptions of absolute monism and yet supporting in the region of practice the most iniquitous distinctions. It is mainly on account of this that our world-shaking ideas in the domain of pure thought have not had that effect upon our social and religious life which they otherwise would have had.

There was, of course, one good result of this. It made one thing possible: for the most revolutionary doctrines of metaphysics flourished without causing any disturbance to our social structure. Indeed, it is doubtful whether, but for this, it would have been possible for us to be as tolerant towards widely divergent opinions as we have been. It is because we took good care to see that no metaphysical views, however extreme they might be, could have any effect upon our practical life, that we could practise almost unlimited toleration. This was what made it possible for the Vedanta and the Sankhya, and even the extremely materialistic Charvaka doctrines to exist side by side. The only exception that was made was in the case of Buddhism and Jainism; but this was due to the fact that these were far more than metaphysical doctrines and wanted to introduce fundamental changes in the social structure.

\* The greatness of Guru Nanak and his originality lay in his perception

that there must be no distinction between theory and practice, that if monism was to be accepted as a principle, it must be accepted wholeheartedly and applied to all the departments of our life. This is why he used frequently to say, "There is no Hindu and no Mussalman." By this he meant that neither the Hindu nor the Mussalman lived up to the monistic doctrine which they professed. What was necessary was that monism should not be merely an intellectual doctrine but that it should pervade the whole of our life.

It is here, I think, that one finds the secret of the success of Guru Nanak. For him monism was not merely an intellectual doctrine, to which one could give a logical justification, but an object of living faith to which one could pour out the whole of one's being.

"A man is as his faith is." Guru Nanak's faith in monism had that rare dynamic quality in it which all builders of nations have. It is this which, above everything else, enabled him to build out of the dying and decaying elements of a worn-out culture an extraordinarily virile nation. It is this which distinguished Guru Nanak's approach to monism from that of so many other great thinkers of our country to whom monism was only a pastime for the intellect.

No one, I believe, has been more true to the monistic doctrine, even in the minutest details of his life, than Guru Nanak. His whole life was in perfect tune with this doctrine. There are numerous incidents which his biographers have recorded, which illustrate this fact. One incident especially may be quoted in this connection. During his visit to Mecca,

he was one day sleeping with his feet in the direction of the sacred black stone in the famous mosque of Mecca. A pious Mussalman saw it and considered it nothing less than a sacrilege, and so he rudely awoke him and turned his feet in the opposite direction. At this, Guru Nanak said, "Show me the direction in which God is not, and I will turn my feet in that direction". And it is narrated that the whole mosque moved and turned in the direction in which Guru Nanak's feet were turned.

He also showed for the same reason his abhorrence for all customs and usages whose meaning was not clear and which could not be reconciled with the monistic principle. Thus it is narrated that one day while taking his bath at Hardwar in the Ganges, he saw a number of people facing the sun and making offerings of water to the spirits of their departed ancestors. Guru Nanak, turning his back towards them, began to throw water in the opposite direction. When asked to explain his strange behaviour, he replied that he was throwing water for the purpose of irrigating his field which was miles away. When asked how he could possibly irrigate his field when it was at a great distance, his reply was that if the offerings of water could reach the dead ancestors, there was no reason why they should not reach his field which was infinitely nearer. His real object was to show that a ritual which was blindly followed without knowing its meaning acted as a hindrance rather than a help to religion.

The one endeavour of his life was to do away with all meaningless ritual and to present the religion of absolute monism in its pure form. This was

the great work of religious reform which he achieved, and the Sikhs have loyally followed the spirit of the Master throughout. This has given them a courage of conviction which has enabled them to face all manner of oppression and suffering.

The other Sikh Gurus followed in the footsteps of the founder. They all shared his absolute monism and his burning zeal for the cause of religion. Two of them, Guru Arjun Deva and Guru Tej Bahadur, suffered martyrdom. The martyrdom of the first, indeed, transformed the Sikhs from a religious into a political and military order. But it was the genius of the tenth and last Guru, Guru Govind Singh, that completed the process, and really made the Sikhs what they are to-day, one of the noblest specimens of humanity from every point of view, moral, physical and intellectual.

There are three great features which distinguish the noble race of men which Guru Nanak and his successors created. In the first place, it is true to the great name it bears, Sikh, which etymologically means a Sishya or disciple. It has been conspicuous for its loyalty and devotion to its Gurus and to the great principles enunciated by them. Its loyalty was not merely a loyalty to the persons of the Gurus—though there was enough of that also—but it was a loyalty first and foremost to the great ideals which the Gurus inculcated. There was no danger, therefore, of its loyalty degenerating into those grotesque forms of hero-worship which the history of many sects in India had, unfortunately, very often exhibited.

Secondly, the Sikhs have exhibited throughout their history a wonderful spirit of discipline. They are, in fact, a living example of what it is possible to achieve through discipline. Unfortunately for our country, this is a virtue which as a nation we sadly lack, and we have paid dearly—I should say too dearly—for this. The Sikhs, however, have been prominent throughout their history for their possession of this quality in abundance. They are a wonderfully disciplined community, and their remarkable achievements have been due in no small measure to the presence of this great virtue.

Thirdly—and as a consequence of the possession of these great qualities—the Sikhs have been distinguished by their wonderful spirit of self-sacrifice. I think no community, with the possible exception of the Christians in the early days of Roman persecution, has shown such a wonderful record of martyrdom for the cause of their religion as the Sikhs have done. If for no other reason, for this alone, their name will ever live in the annals of the world. Indeed not until the whole race of mankind is wiped out, can their record of martyrdom die. It is hard to express the feeling that may be aroused in one when one contemplates the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Deva or Guru Tej Bahadur or Bhai Mani Singh, the devoted disciple of Guru Govind, who, when he was subjected to the most cruel torture that human ingenuity could devise, when his body was sawed in two, silently bore all his pain, uttering only the words, "Sri Kartar". There is something really superhuman in this heroic suffering and sacrifice.

Such suffering and sacrifice can never go in vain, as the poet puts:

    Say not the struggle nought availeth,  
    The labour and the wounds are vain;  
    The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
    And as things have been, they remain.

We shall derive hope and consolation, in the present gloom that surrounds us, from the thought that a nation which is capable of such wonderful self sacrifice has a great future before it. Indeed, the best remedy that can be suggested, when we feel depressed and our minds are assailed by gloomy thoughts about the future of our country, is to contemplate the martyrdom of these Sikh saints. All our gloom and despair will vanish, and we will feel, that a nation which could produce martyrs like these can never die.

What are the services which the Sikhs have rendered to our country? They have taught us three things, loyalty, discipline and sacrifice. These are the most essential virtues that a nation should possess. At a time when the whole structure of our society was crumbling to pieces at the shock of foreign invasion, the Sikhs infused a new spirit which checked this disruption. Theirs is a wonderfully vitalizing influence. No religion in modern times has produced such a rejuvenating effect as theirs has done. They have succeeded, where others have failed, in galvanizing into activity an old and decrepit nation.

Three centuries after the birth of Guru Nanak, India again produced in the person of Raja Rammohan Ray

an equally zealous champion of absolute monism and an equally uncompromising opponent of all superstition. But Rammohan Ray could not leave behind such a trained band of workers as Guru Nank did. Here we see the value of loyalty and discipline. The history of the Sikhs presents to us the unique spectacle of a great reformer's work being carried on by nine successive masters who, far from allowing the original founder's work to deteriorate, added each his own contribution. The result is what we see today, the birth of a nation which has left a unique record on the pages of history.

In this respect there is a good deal of resemblance between the Sikh Order and the Order founded by Sri Ramakrishna. Both have the fortune of having their Founder's work carried on faithfully by a band of devoted disciples. There is also another and a deeper resemblance between the great religious movement started by

Guru Nanak and that inaugurated by Sri Ramakrishna. Both are animated by the same fundamental ideas of faith, discipline and service. Both believe that a religion worth the name should be one which must pervade the whole of one's life. Both have faith in the possibility of building up a race through intense religious devotion. But while the Sikh Gurus have concentrated themselves mainly upon the development of what may be called the heroic qualities of the race, the followers of Sri Ramakrishna have directed their efforts chiefly to the creation of a band of ideal Sevakas, selfless men whose only religion is service of mankind. What India requires today is both these types of men—the virile Sikh who is prepared to lay down his life for the sake of his country and religion, and the meek, selfless Sevaka who knows only one way of serving God, and that is through the service of humanity.

## THE SAVING SPIRIT IN THE STORIES

BY R. RAMAKRISHNAN, M.A., L.T.

[Not merely men of letters, but even statesmen and scientists, have mostly derived, in their childhood, an impetus to their future achievements from mythology and biography. Eminence in any walk of life is not for those whose imaginative faculty has not been properly developed; and there is no better device to gain this end than by treating children to a rich repast of healthy stories culled from every source. Mr. Ramakrishnan draws pointed attention to this question with special reference to our own country and times.—The Editors.]

I remember to have come across, some time ago, a news item which is very revealing of the times we live in. A certain Christian divine went into a Christian school for the young, and put a question to the assembled children: "Tell me the name of the

noblest personality in the world's history. The name begins with the letter J." The pious divine naturally expected that a hundred voices would cry out "Jesus" in answer. He was disappointed. There was silence for a minute, and then a bright boy stood

up, and shouted out a name beginning with J. It was not the Christ's name, but the name of a cinema "star" or a record breaker (I do not recollect which) who was just then the talk of the world and the craze of the daily press. And the divine walked out in sober melancholy. The pupils had certainly heard about Jesus, but the Christ was not uppermost in their apperception mass.

If anyone walks into one of our own Indian schools today and puts a question to the pupils about our epic heroes like Karna and Arjuna and Bhishma, or about our ancient seekers after wisdom like Nachiketas and Satyakama Jabala, or about the circumstances in which the Gita was recited, the response would be equally disastrous. Perhaps Rama and Krishna are familiar names to the children, but not many others.

It is true that the situation is slightly improving now, thanks to the growth of the film industry in our land. Many of the talkies have for their plots incidents from the Puranas. But God forbid that we should ever learn our Puranas from the silver screen of today. None denies that the film industry has great educational possibilities, and that it may be used as a potent instrument of mass education. But it is an acknowledged fact that our film industry is nowhere near perfection at present, and more often than not, the representation of Puranic themes on the screen gives the audience a wrong impression and a distorted picture of the ancient age; our gods on the screen have no halo of divinity, our heroes are not even manly and our women are devoid of that adorable innocence and that quiet spiritual

strength which constitute the essence of Indian womanhood.

This state of affairs, this ignorance of the future citizens of the land in the matter of the nature of the contribution to our progress by our ancient national leaders, this absence of a vital association with the genius of the makers of Mother India—this is a disquieting situation indeed. It is all true to say that a mere brooding over past greatness, or a proud recollection of vanished glories does not help us very much. But still if the present is an evolution, a continuation, a result, of the past, we must in our own interests, have a knowledge of the forces, and an adequate appreciation of the personalities that made the past what it was. We read in history of a Shivaji who founded a kingdom; and we read too, of how his mother Jiji Bai fed him on epic and Puranic lore in his boyhood, and how she was thereby able to kindle in him a passion for the resuscitation of Dharma. How many among our modern mothers are qualified to be Jiji Bais—makers of heroes?

Even a generation or two ago the situation was not so bad as now. Mothers in the quiet Indian village homes were unlettered then, but they knew all the old stories by heart, and as their children lay in bed or sat for meals they told the wondering little ones these stories. Almost throughout the year in the villages there was the recitation of the Puranas by a Pandit who translated them to the masses. Frequently there were Harikatha performances too. But times are changing, have changed. And a something that was golden, a something that contributed to the simple joy of the villagers of the previous generations,

has now disappeared. We of today are often merry, but rarely joyful. The daily newspaper with its nerve-shaking tidings of wars and betrayals, accidents and assaults, has gained possession of us. We are getting more of knowledge but less of wisdom. The daily trifles of the world are too much with us. We feed our senses and our intellect, but starve our noble emotions and our soul.

Every religion, it has been said, has three parts—philosophy, ritual, mythology. Mythology is concretised philosophy. Instead of expounding abstract principles to the people, mythology presents before them personalities who are the embodiment of those principles. We refer to the Ramayana in the history class in the school and hasten to add that it is mythology, not history, and that India's history begins from 600 B.C.! And the little boys and girls wonder what a land India was before 600 B.C.! There may be exaggerations in the old stories, but boys and girls have the capacity to sort the wheat from the chaff. And what if a man called Rama did not actually exist? The person who created "Rama" must himself have been a Rama. It is not you and I that can create a Falstaff or an Othello; only a Shakespeare can. And then there is a tendency in man to measure everything by the yard-stick of his own miserably poor achievement and apperception. Perhaps in 2000 A.D. when people read of a period in Sri Ramakrishna's life when he was not able to touch metal, or of the epic fast of Gandhi for three weeks, they will smile and regard it all as exaggeration, as the outcome of the well-meaning desire of devoted disciples to glorify their masters!

Let us therefore keep our children in the warm, sunny storyland. Let us save the stories and the stories will save us!

The child is the father of the man, says the poet. So any reform of man must first touch the child. And the child can be touched effectively only at school. Our schools must take on themselves the responsibility of preserving our ancient stories and of infusing the spirit of the stories into the souls of children. Nothing pleases children so much as stories. Nothing brings light to their eyes and glow to their faces so readily as stories do. Children's imagination is more fertile than ours. They can "hold infinity in the palm of a hand and eternity in an hour." They can visualise narrated incidents more truthfully than elders can. The dusty accretions of ages petrify and dwarf the elders' powers of fancy and imagination. A good story-teller can kindle storms in the child's soul, elicit sympathy for suffering, rouse indignation over wrongs done, create satisfaction at the intervention of divine justice. When we do not feed children on stories, we put fish on land, we plant rice in the Sahara.

Indian culture especially owes a good deal to stories. Stories have, so to say, interwoven themselves into Indian social life. Our ancient heroes figure in our common talk and in most of our proverbs. Not to be acquainted with the content of the stories is therefore to fail to understand the inner significance of Indian modes of thought and expression.

It is the duty of the educationists, therefore, to include stories in the school syllabus and in a curriculum of adult or mass education. Can any

one regard himself as an Indian, if he does not know of the perseverance of Viswamitra, of the exploits of Parasurama, of the endeavours of Bhagiratha, of the suffering in the cause of truth of Harischandra? Swami Vivekananda exhorts our women to hold Sita, Savitri and Damayanti as their ideals. How can our women follow their footsteps without knowing their lives? Without the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Indian literature will shrink to very small proportions, and yet how many of us can honestly say we have read through the seven cantos of the one or the eighteen chapters of the other? We have no time to go through their unending pages. And yet in days not very distant from now, lived people who could recite long passages of the epics from memory. We are busy with too many nothings now, and the epics have no part or lot with our scheme of earthly existence. And we pride ourselves on our progress!

Walk into any school or college in the land, and meet any Hindu student who reads Greek and Roman history, and ask him who Patanjali is, or what are the Prasthana-traya, or who wrote the Vivkachudamani, or what is the main theme of the Katha Upanishad—and you will have an idea of our cultural decline.

Of course the argument will be advanced that India being a land of many faiths, and our schools having to cater to the needs of many sects of pupils, any attempt to teach Hindu stories will lead to difficulties. For goodness' sake, let us, in this twentieth century, transcend the bondage of sects and communities and be simple Men. The story of young Nachiketas going to the

very door of death to gain wisdom, spurning the lordship over the universe that was offered to him instead of the wisdom he sought—has this story no significance, no lessons for those who happen to be non-Hindus? The generosity of a Karna, the sacrifice of a Sibi, the passion for truth of a Harischandra, the goodness of a Bharata, the supreme realisation of a Jada Bharata, the righteousness of a Yudhishtira, the manliness of an Arjuna, the heroism of a Savitri—have these no appeal to non-Hindus? Do not non-Christians find solace in the Bible? Are the teachings of the Gita limited to the four corners of the land of its origin? There is an inner essence in our scriptures and stories, which has an universal appeal. And so, even cosmopolitan schools need not shrink shy of Hindu stories. It is high time that people belonging to a particular sect or faith realise that they are the heirs to all the wisdom of all the lands.

It is also desirable that the birthdays of our most illustrious ancestors are celebrated in home and schools. The occasions will serve as reminders to us to be worthy of our heroes.

Numerous schemes are being tried and talked of in the matter of building a glorious new India. Wisdom lies in our utilising to the maximum advantage the legacy of the past that has come down to us through our stories.

There is a saving spirit in our stories which may advantageously be used for holding aloft before the people's vision a great ideal progressively. And a clear comprehension of the ideal to be reached is the first step in the way of its realisation.

## CONDITIONS OF HIGHER LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

{These are the notes of the class-talk given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

### I

SRI Ramakrishna has shown us all the different steps of spiritual life. All work that can be done, can be done only through that which we ourselves have actually become, never through fine words and sermons. We must observe perfect Brahmacharya, for without perfect Brahmacharya no lasting work can be done. Work is never a question of eloquence, of high philosophy, of superfine thoughts and sermons, but of actual living. And if there is no perfect Brahmacharya at the back of our work and our words, nothing we do can ever produce any lasting effect.

The stronger the disease, the stronger must be the medicines. And in the West this terrible disease of "Woman and Gold" has become most virulent. So, very strong injections are needed to cure people and make them regain consciousness. In this age small doses no longer suffice. In the beginning smaller doses may be given, just to prepare the system, but the strongest dose must be taken by all of us some day. And these high doses will have to be taken for a long time if the germ is really to be killed. Different crises will come. In the case of every disease there is a curative crisis, and even this curative crisis is one of the necessary steps leading to the perfect cure. Through all our innumerable previous lives we have enjoyed these things;

we have been fathers and mothers and friends and children, have undergone birth and death. Why not see this time, just as an experiment, what a real life of renunciation is like and compare the two kinds of lives. Let us see, out of sheer inquisitiveness, what the higher life of perfect purity is like.

Ramprasad sings, "O my mind, why art thou lying fallow when thou canst raise crops of gold if thou willest, out of thyself?"

Never use the violent method with your mind. Try to cajole it into reason. Try to persuade it with quiet, calm and reasonable words. Our whole evolution becomes easier if it becomes a conscious evolution. Your power of determination must be made stronger day by day through different spiritual practices. Because we are not able to get the higher thing, why should we take the lower one instead? Fasting is always better than taking filth. Die for the higher ideal. Swamiji once said to his brother-disciples, "If I wish to get a certain thing, and do not get it, does this mean that I should run after something else?"

### II

Real silence is the silence of the mind. It is stilling the mind and freeing it from all unwelcome thoughts. First attain the thought of the Divine, and then try to eliminate all other thoughts that cannot

be directly connected with the Divine thought. "Mere external solitude will not make one forget the world, and that alone is real solitude in which one merges oneself in Brahman." We do not enter into solitude by merely getting into the forest or the monastery. We must know how to annihilate the world in our mind. When you sit for meditation, erase all ideas of the world in your mind and think of the Lord alone.

If we possess anything we must possess it as trustees, not as owners, administering it on behalf of the Lord alone. There must never be any sense of personal possession, however much we may happen to possess.

Faith in oneself is absolutely necessary in spiritual life. But in the case of the really spiritual man faith in himself means, at the same time, faith in God, because he has realized that his essence is the Divine and nothing but the Divine. "By thinking that we are the Atman we gain infinite strength. Then through the highest knowledge we attain to Immortality".

All Great Ones stress Brahmacarya in all its aspects again and again. The Atman is ever pure and sexless. All our troubles arise through this clinging to a false personality. Spiritual life is blasting of this false personality, the pulverising of the ego, of all our littleness and limitedness. And the thought of the Atman shakes the very foundations of this false personality and of all our false relations with others.

Think deeply on this conception of the Atman before beginning your meditation. Think that you are spiritual entities freed from the body,

mind, passions, desires and all the rest. If there be such a thing as sin at all, it is this clinging to creation and to the personality.

That alone is moral and spiritual which helps us in purifying our heart and our mind, and in attaining the goal. Everything else, whatever it be, is immoral. Purity alone is the condition of the Lord's grace.

Renunciation—mental and physical renunciation—is the central theme of all spiritual life and of all those who have really followed it. Renunciation of wealth and greed, renunciation of all forms and aspects of sex and lust, renunciation of the ego—when these three things are achieved, spiritual life becomes natural and unstrained, and then God-vision comes to a person as a matter of course.

This is the ideal of the threefold renunciation for this sense-bound egocentric age of ours in which we are all running after the vanities and will-o'-the-wisps of life. It is the redemption from the trammels of "Woman and Gold" that is salvation. As Swamiji said in his "Song of the Sannyasin,"

"Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed of gain reside;  
No man who thinks of woman as his wife can ever perfect be;  
Nor he who owns however little, nor he  
Whom anger chains, can ever pass through Maya's gates.  
So give these up, Sannyasin bold, say—Om Tat Sat Om!"

This is the great unchanging Truth proclaimed by all the Great Ones, and this Truth includes the threefold renunciation without which there can never be any spiritual life.

In every country we need just a few sincere individuals who strive for the highest ideal, for this ideal of perfect purity in thought, word and deed, who are prepared to give their all for this ideal, who are prepared to suffer anything for its realisation. We can influence other people to the extent to which we succeed in influencing ourselves for the better, we can never convert the masses. We can never make the masses spiritual, but we can change the lives of a few sincere individuals whose time has come.

### III

In the streets you see such a lot of hideousness and perversity on the faces of people. Painted woman, nicely shaved men, all beautifully dressed, but on their faces there is nothing but greed and sex. As soon as you become a little more introspective and sensitive, you, too, will see, how hideous all this is. Rarely do you come across a face in the streets that has not got "beast" and "lust" clearly written over it. All this is a sign of degeneration. This makes the leading of a pure life so difficult for the beginner. So long as this beastliness is not dropped, and they are content to remain beasts all their life, degeneration cannot be stopped in anyway. Beware of being stained and polluted by the thoughts of these beasts poisoning the air all around you.

And if you cannot redeem this degenerate society, then redeem your selves, but realize how miserable all these brutes are. They themselves are miserable and they create misery for others, they soil others, poison others through their dirty vibrations. All their dirty thoughts can be read

clearly on their faces. That is what makes it so very unpleasant to walk in the streets. You see that all the talks of these worldly people turn round and round the topics of money-making, politics and sex in all their most dirty aspects. What do you see in your theatres, cinemas, novels, songs, etc.? Sex, politics, money-making.

We are not yet sensitive enough. We do not yet clearly recognise our own motives. Sometimes our mind is allowed to find nice plausible explanations for our doings and thoughts, just to deceive us as is always the case in the untrained person. Tell your mind: "Let me see that you break down," if it complains against the great strain of the practices. If we try to lead the higher life, we should not mind our dying even if we die in the attempt. And the mind will go on revolting and complaining for a long time. It says, "Look here, to-day you have had very little sleep. This may be bad for your nerves. Take care that you do not get a nervous breakdown. Stop your practices for a day or two." Just give it some good kicks in such a case, whip it nicely, be very hard with this bad mind. Just as a horse gets whipped when it lies down with its rider, so you must give your mind a good thrashing if it revolts.

There must be a fixed daily routine. Repeat the name of God as many number of times as possible. You must have a minimum, and that minimum is to be done and finished under all circumstances. In the morning never touch food before having done this minimum of your spiritual practice. On no plea whatsoever should we stop doing it.

" Think of Me and fight, carry on your fight, and through My grace you will be able to vanquish the enemy and find peace," says Sri Krishna. And this fight takes subtler and subtler forms as we progress, and thereby becomes all the more difficult and relentless. It must be fought till the very end. The subtler the world, the subtler and greater the struggle. If a bad thought rises even in dream, you must find no excuse for yourselves.

#### IV

At the beginning, when we are given the seed, we cannot yet know its potentiality; but as we advance we find that the seed contains a mighty tree, but it must be properly watered and manured. Have some holy picture as the first thing and the last thing, directly after awaking and directly before falling asleep. Never think of other people or objects before having had this holy picture before you and filled your mind with it. This is very necessary for the beginner. Ramprasad sings, " O my mind, why do you not put up a fence round the tree with the Mother's Name?" First we take it to be just a name and nothing more, but this name has its subtler aspect and takes us to the Divine. We cannot recognise its infinite potentiality in the beginning. When we do our practices regularly for some time, this mind of ours becomes tutored, trained; but even then, at times, just like a trained horse, it tries to bolt.

Regarding Asana (posture) you should have two different ones, so that you can change it as soon as your body begins to hurt you. The central theme of Sadhana is medita-

tion, and everything else is but a preparation for the mind to have the right mood. When the right mood comes, meditation becomes very easy. In India there is now a revival of practising the different Asanas. But it is not at all necessary for spiritual life. The ease of an Asana can only be realized after sufficient practice.

Five to six hours of sleep is enough for the spiritual aspirant. Eight hours is generally too much. Sleep, as such, is not so necessary as the conscious minimising of our nervous and mental tension at all times of the day. In order to be able to meditate, we must be able to relax, we should first learn how to decrease the tension of our nerves. Very nervous people can never meditate. After that we should get control over our sentiments and feelings, even if they be good and pure or elevated ones. By developing the spirit of self-surrender we should make the mind passive, attuned to the Infinite, and thereby minimise all anxiety and our terrible nervous and mental tension. If we are able to do this, we feel a sort of peace, even long before being able really to meditate. We should make it a point to relax our nerves as much as possible before we attempt meditation.

Everything must be definite, clear. You must know how to sleep and what to do with your waking time, how to awake, how to fall asleep, what thoughts to have while awaking, and what thoughts to have just before falling asleep. The life of the spiritual aspirant must be conscious and regulated in all its phases and aspects. Before sleep, make your mind passive by filling it with some very holy and pure thoughts of the Divine

or of a Great Spiritual Personality in a wholly dispassionate and unstrained way.

Everything depends on the purity and absolute chastity of thought; and unless this is brought about, our tension can never be reduced. Our sleep is undisturbed only if we know how to think and feel properly in the waking state. Let all those who lead the spiritual life not be bothered about the animal existence. Body-worship and sex-worship are the most vicious and degenerating forms of idolatry that can ever exist and ever existed.

## V

Our heart is to be made consciously a cremation-ground—the cremation-ground of all our attachments, of all our impurities, of our whole personality. This eternal struggle is the worship of the Lord, the only true worship there is, and it should never unnerve us. Our trouble is that we worship only a God who gives us pleasure and sense-satisfaction and blessings. But is not also misery His? Everywhere we worship the God who is full of boons and the Giver of boons. And as soon as we think of a Thunderer we are afraid. Shiva as Giver of boons is all right. Shiva dancing the mad dance of destruction is horrible! Why? There is no rhyme and reason in our attitude. God is God only when there is creation, when there is preservation; but when there is destruction, God has no hand in it! No. God is God only when He is God in all aspects. When He is the God of creation, preservation and destruction, and above all the God who is none of all these. So the present-day reaction against the religion of a merely good God is

to be welcomed. When you give the modern mind a kind and good God, it will throw Him overboard; but when you give the modern mind the whole, it will, in most cases, accept Him.

God in His aspect of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer is Mother. Mother again in Her absolute aspect, beyond all these, is Shiva. Thus the relative aspect of God, as it were, is Mother; the absolute aspect of God, i.e., the same Mother in Her state beyond creation, preservation and destruction, is Shiva. Mother is dancing Her mad play of creation, preservation and destruction on Shiva who is lying under Her feet, motionless and unconcerned, appearing to be dead. What wonderful, infinitely deep symbols of Truth all these are!

Why be afraid of death? Death can be glorious. Where do we find the greatest play of Mother? Only in the cremation-ground, and the cremation-ground is as real and true as the nursery is. In life and in death the aspirant should cling to the Mother, and the Mother alone, giving up both.

It always so happens that he who has a great clinging for pleasant things gets misery. Physical distress is nothing compared with the mental distress; and suffering we all have to pass through in life. So we should always know that Truth is beyond happiness and misery, and can only be attained by transcending them both.

Ramprasad sings, "O my fickle mind, never stop taking the name of the Mother at all times, come what may. You pass through misery. You

may have more. What does it matter?"

No physical suffering can ever be compared with the terrible tempests raging in the human mind, and all these tempests can never be transcended so long as we cling to life in

its pleasant aspect and deny or try to deny its terrible aspect. We must be fully prepared to transcend both the good and the terrible aspects of God, if we really wish to reach Him and to attain to peace and blessedness.

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### THOUGHT GEMS

As long as I live, so long do I learn.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

Ignorance is the first penalty of pride.—*Proverb*.

The grain of guilt planted by pride ripens to a harvest of tears.—*Anonymous*.

There is more hope for a fool than he that is wise in his own conceit.—*Proverb*.

Such as give ear to slanders, are worse than slanderers themselves.—*Domitian*.

The first and last thing that is demanded of genius is love of truth.—*Goethe*.

Nothing is profitable which is dishonest.—*Cicero*.

Nature has given us two ears, two eyes, and but one tongue, to the end we should hear and see more than we speak.—*Socrates*.

Nothing more precious than time, yet nothing less valued.—*St. Bernard*.

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.—*R. W. Emerson*.

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA : A VINDICATION OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

BY SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA

[The following is the text of a lecture which swami Siddheswarananda delivered on the occasion of the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at Paris.—The Editors.]

THREE years back, during the time of Sri Ramakrishna's birth centenary, a celebration of that occasion was held under the auspices of the Institute of Indian Civilisation at the Sorbonne. All over India, wherever the name of the Master is revered, there was a feeling of legitimate pride that within the portals of one of the premier universities of the world, in the heart of Paris, which Swami Vivekananda considered as the centre of European civilisation and culture, the ideas and ideals for which Sri Ramakrishna stood were given the respect and veneration that they have commanded all the world over. The existence of the *Centre Vedantique* here is the direct result of that celebration of the centenary in Paris. And on this occasion may I take the liberty to thank all who had made this possible, as also you who have assembled here to-day in response to our invitation to celebrate this yearly function.

Sri Ramakrishna we consider not merely as a personality but a principle. And that principle is the spiritual value the world has ever recognised from times immemorial. Sri Ramakrishna came not to show us anything new; but his life is an extra-ordinary searchlight under whose illumination one can have true perspective of these very eternal values we have dreamed as the culmination of spiritual experience. And herein

lies the universal importance of the teachings of the Master exemplified through his life. "*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadantai*—Truth is one; sages call it by various names." This is one of the greatest discoveries made by the Upanishadic Sages. Herein we get the most literal charter of spiritual freedom and tolerance the world has ever known; and the life of Sri Ramakrishna is a manifestation of the possibilities of concretising in actual life the spiritual treasures enshrined in these Vedic utterances.

Religious truths have come to mankind in various epochs under various forms. But often in the hands of the followers of the Masters to whom came the rich revelation, these truths assumed the prerogative of monopolies. Truth got institutionalised. It became a prisoner and thereby lost its value. There is the possibility of understanding the same truth in multiple ways. The Vedic seers recognised this cosmopolitan character of truth. In Gita we find Krishna teaching the same ideal when there was a crying need of its re-formulation. Right through the corridor of time we had great, broad, ideals in religion. In India we make a distinction between Mata and Tattva; Mata is religion but Tattva is Truth. All Matas lead one to the same Tattva. And that mental reading of Tattva through one's faith towards the ultimate realities of life is one's

religion. From this point of view there can be many religions as there are individuals; but the Truth to which they take us is always *One*, whose multiple expressions the religions are. Lack of comprehension of this has created the greatest misery in the world. True civilisation is always a "co-operative endeavour"; but instead of this attitude when sectarianism and a feeling of monopoly to hold and propagate truth seizes human mind, it is worse than insanity. And our earth instead of becoming a haven of peace is turned into a valley of tears. To restate the true value of religion as paths leading to Truth, great Masters bless this world of ours. The hates and passions of men prevent their acceptance. Still they come, and give us their life-giving messages. The life of Sri Ramakrishna is one such cry in the wilderness. Will the world harken to the understanding of these messages which alone can enfranchise man from the thraldom of the senses and slavery to passion? Perhaps at no other epoch there is a pressing need to gain this understanding; today under the guise of the war of ideologies we are once again in the grip of a wave of hatred which recalls to us the wars of religions in the Middle Ages with its history of persecutions, inquisition and massacres; if the future of humanity is a "federation of the world in the parliament of Man" as poet Tennyson has put it, then that can be inaugurated only by an understanding of each other's ideologies. The life of Sri Ramakrishna, as we understand, is a living

commentary on this phase of truth and today as we celebrate his birthday anniversary, let us pay heed to this vital point in his message.

France had the honour of bringing to Europe the light of the Orient in philosophy and religion. It was Anketil Duperon in the 18th century that for the first time, published a translation of the Upanishads. Study of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy has now become a feature of almost all the universities in the Occident. And outside the universities men of great reputation—to mention only the names Mon. Rene Genon and Mon. Romain Rolland in France—have brought through translations and expositions the knowledge of Oriental things to the doors of the ordinary man. East and West stand once more united as in the Hellenic period when there was deep cultural contact between the two continents. If today we meet here, it is not only to pay our homage to one of the masterminds of modern Indian Renaissance, but it is also to bring our offerings to the temple of true culture and civilisation that we by our united efforts have to build, so that humanity may be saved from a second lapse into barbarism and savagery. In these days of despair when we doubt the foundations of human culture, the memory of the great ones gives us cheer and hope and makes us feel that *all* is not lost. The sleeping forces of good once more revive in us; and again we hear the Upanishads murmur:— "*Uttishthata jagrata pratyavaran nibodhata.*" Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached.

## THE NĀRĀDA BHAKTI SŪTRĀS

### (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYAGISANANDA

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakata* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring Chapters in India's religious literature.]

#### SUTRAS 46 TO 50

The main principles of spiritual *Sadhana* have been dealt with in the previous eight Sutras. In the next five Sutras Narada points out how all practices must inevitably lead to love of God before they can give *Mukti*. *Sandilya* goes to the extent of saying that *Samsara* is due only to want of *Bhakti* and not to lack of *Jnana* (Vide Sutra 98). The *Bhakti-sutras* however has no quarrel with *Jnana* and *Dharma* as such, and the two latter are also pressed into service as handmaids of *Bhakti*. On a careful study of the teachings of the various schools of spiritual culture, we find a wonderful similarity in the exercises prescribed, the differences being only in relative emphasis. There can be really no question of superiority or inferiority, nor can there be any question of priority or posteriority of one practice over another, as such. Superiority or priority depends on nothing else than differences in temperaments, capacities and opportunities. Different writers have given different orders of precedence, and have described the various *Bhumikas* or stages through which the aspirant has to pass before he reaches the goal; but each aspirant is free to take up such of these practices as appeal to him according to his tastes and conveniences. (Vide *Sandilya* Sutra 62.) In fact spiritual practice

cannot be divided into watertight compartments, and each one of them shade off inevitably into the others. *Sandilya* reminds us that each one of them is capable of leading to God by itself unaided by others. But the truth may be better expressed by saying that each one of them is an epitome in itself of all spiritual practice.

Thus *Bhagavata* gives an exhaustive list of spiritual practices in the words of *Bhagavan* himself in Book, XI: chapter 19, verses 20-24. Narada himself gives another list in Bk. XI ch. 2 to 5. *Sandilya* refers to them in Sutras 27 and 28 as well as in Sutras 56 and 57. The *Gita* refers to them in its ninth chapter. *Ramananda Roy* expounds to *Sri Chaitanyaadeva* the following steps in spiritual practice:— (1) *Swadharmacharana* or performance of one's own duties as prescribed in *Vishnu-purana* III: 8.8. (2) *Krishnarpana* or dedication of one's actions and their fruits to God as mentioned in *Gita* IX: 27.3. (3) *Swadharmanyaga* or renunciation of one's duties as mentioned in *Gita*, XVIII: 66. and *Bhagavata*, XI: 11.32. (4) *Jnanamisra-bhakti* or love mixed with knowledge, as referred to in *Gita*, XVIII: 54. (5) *Jnana-sunya-bhakti* or love devoid of knowledge as mentioned in *Bhagavata*, X: 14.3. (6) *Prema-bhakti*. (7) *Dasya-bhakti* or the devotion of a servant.

(8) Sakhya-bhakti or devotion of a friend. (9) Vatsalya-bhakti or devotion of a parent and (10) Kanta-bhakti or the devotion of a wife to her husband. (11) Radha-bhakti or the devotion of a mistress to her paramour. In the Bhakti-rasarnava-sindhu, Rupa-Goswami describes the various stages as consisting of Sradhha, Sanga, Bhajana-kriya, Anartha-nivritti, Nistha-ruchi, Asakti, Bhava and Prema. Madhusudana Saraswati in Bhakti Rasayana, 1.32 and 34, describes the various Bhumikas as consisting in Mahat-seva, Tad-daya-patrata, Sraddha, Harguna-sruti, Rati-ankuro'tpatti, Swarupa-dhigati and Prema. In Bengal Vaishnavaite poems the love itself is said to pass through the stages of Purva-raga, Milana, Sambhoga, Viraha and Bhava-sammilana. The Yogavasishtha enumerates the following seven Bhumikas, *viz*, Subhechcha, Vicharana, Tanu-mansa, Satvapatti, Asamsakti Padartha-bhavana and Turyaga. Saint Augustine has seven steps consisting of Fear of God, reverent study of the divine revelation, love of God and fellowmen, steadfast self-discipline, soul-cleaning, soul-enlightenment and bliss. St. Teresa's seven steps are Recollection, Quiet, Union, Ecstasy, Rapt, the Pain of God, and Spiritual Marriage. The neo-platonists speak of three stages, *viz*, purgation, illumination and ecstasy. Richard of St. Victor speaks of dilation of the mind, elevation of the mind and ecstasy. Jacopone da Todi speaks of self-conquest, loving intuition and ecstasy. Dionysius, the Areopagitae, speaks of Purification, Illumination and Union.

In the following Sutras Narada gives us his own classification. He

begins with giving up of all contact with objects of senses such as are likely to inflame passion and tempt the aspirant from his path to the goal, and through twelve stages takes the aspirant up to the love of God which alone can save him finally from Samsara.

कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाप ?

यः सङ्कं त्यजति, यो महातुभावं सेवते,  
निर्भमो भवति ॥ ४६ ॥

कः Who ? मायाप the world of senses with all its troubles and tribulations तरति crosses. यः He who सङ्कं contacts with objects which are likely to inflame passions त्यजति gives up. महातुभावम् spiritually great soul सेवते resorts to and serves निर्भमः free from all possessions भवति becomes.

46. Who crosses, who crosses the Maya ? He who avoids all contact with such objects of the senses as are likely to inflame passions, and resorts to spiritually great souls and serves them, and gets rid of his possessions in their service.

Notes.—Just as a man hankering after perfection in physical health has to give up all kinds of food and other objects of enjoyment which are likely to be injurious to the body, and should get away from all insanitary surroundings, so the spiritual aspirant must first avoid all enjoyments and surroundings as are likely to tempt him from the path of righteousness and lead him to perdition. Just as the former has to attend a gymnasium and take physical exercises under the inspiration and guidance of physical culture experts, the latter has to re-

sort to a Guru, and serve him, and in the light of his example and precepts do such exercises as would develop him spiritually. The immediate result of such contact with a spiritually great man will be his readiness to give up everything he holds dear for the service of such Guru and thus free himself of all properties and possessions. As Christ says, he has to go and sell all that he has and give to the poor before he can follow him. When one has to swim across the bottomless ocean of Samsara it is better to reduce as much weight as possible by ridding oneself of all one's belongings. This is easily achieved in the process of serving one's Guru. He considers all his properties as belonging to God and feels that he holds them only in trust for Him and His devotees and spends them in their service. He leaves even his family and becomes completely care-free. He feels with Thoreau that property is theft, with Count Tolstoy that it is smeared with the blood of the poor, and would have none of it for his own use.

यो विविक्तस्थानं सेवते, यो लोकबन्धमुन्मूलयति, निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवति, यो योगक्षेमं त्यजति ॥ ४७ ॥

यः Who विविक्तस्थानम् lonely place सेवते resorts to यः who लोकबन्धम् the bondage to the pleasures of the three worlds उन्मूलयति roots out निस्त्रैगुण्यः free from the effects of the three Gunas भवति becomes यः who योगक्षेमम् all ideas of acquisition and preservation त्यजति gives up.

47. He who resorts to a solitary place, roots out his bondage to the pleasures of the three

worlds, gets free from the effects of the three Gunas and gives up all ideas of acquisition and preservation.

*Notes.*—Renouncing one's family as well as properties, one has to betake oneself to a place free from all distractions, and giving up even the company of the saints, one has to retire into the secret recesses of one's heart and there one has to meditate on the blissful form of the Lord who has taken his seat in the lotus of his heart, without allowing any other thought to enter therein. By long uninterrupted practice of this meditation, without making a show of it to anyone, all the bondages of the heart are rent asunder. He attains that dispassion which is referred to in Patanjali, I: 15, as Vasikara. By constant practice of this he is able to get over all his egoistic impulses and be free from the effects of all the three Gunas. He is not only not affected by Tamas and Rajas and their effects, but even by those of Sattya. Thus, he reaches a stage of dispassion, associated only with the state of freedom from the bondage of the three Gunas, which is known as Para-vairagya. *Vide* Patanjali, 1.16. When that stage is reached there is no more any desire in the heart, because there is no feeling of limitations or imperfections caused by the Gunas. Hence no thought arises as to how to get on in this world. The Lord indeed promises such a man in Gita, IX: 22, that he need not worry himself about such things, as He would take that responsibility upon Himself. So again says Christ in his sermon on the mount, St. Mathew, Ch. VI: 25 to 34. See for example how during

the whole of Sri Ramakrishna's life his welfare was looked after by Rani Rasmani and Mathurnath.

यः कर्मफलं त्यजति, कर्माणि सन्न्यस्यति, ततो निर्द्वन्द्वो भवति ॥ ४८ ॥

यः Who कर्मफलं the fruits of work त्यजति gives up कर्माणि works सन्न्यस्यति renounces ततः thereby निर्द्वन्द्वः free from the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain भवति becomes.

48. He who gives up the fruits of all work, renounces all selfish activities and passes beyond all pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain.

*Notes.*—When he reaches this stage he avoids everything which is the product of work, for everything that is produced by mere human effort, even if it be enjoyment in heaven, is worthless because of its impermanence. He is attracted only to God who is the only permanent being among all that is impermanent. Therefore, he does not attend to any work for his own sake, although God makes use of him as an instrument for carrying out his inscrutable purposes. He does not feel that he is the agent and as such he is free from the results of all works which take the form of pleasure and pain. All Punya and Papa fall away from him. *Vide Brahmasutara*, IV: 1.13 and 14. Also *Chand. Up.* IV: 14.3. and *V: 24.3. Mundaka Up.* II: 2.8, *Br. Up. IV: 4.22 etc.* See also *Patanjali, IV: 7.*

यो वेदानपि सन्न्यस्यति, केवलमविच्छिन्नातुरां लभते ॥ ४९ ॥

यः Who वेदान् the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the

Vedas अपि even सन्न्यस्यति renounces. केवलम् unalloyed अविच्छिन्नातुराम् unintermittent love लभते obtains.

49. He who gives up even the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Vedas and obtains unalloyed and unintermittent love.

*Notes.*—Rites and rituals are required only in the early stages; they form the kindergarten of religion. There is no more necessity for them when the spiritual practices, of which they are external symbols, are taken up in real earnest and practised internally. So the advanced Sadhaka feels no necessity for them and gives them up. But he may continue to do them as worship to set an example to others, although he has no sense of agency as in the case of other activities. *Vide Brahmasutras*, IV: 1.16 and 17, as well as *Bhagavata*, XI: 7.11 which says, "Beyond the reach of both merit and demerit, such a man will like a child desist from prohibited actions but not through a sense of evil, and perform enjoined actions but not through an idea that it will conduce to merit." He simply is contented with immersing himself continuously in his love of God. It is this love that finally saves man from Samsara as noted in the next Sutra.

सः तरति स तरति लोकांस्तारयति ॥ ५० ॥

सः He तरति crosses लोकान् the world तारयति carries across.

50. He crosses indeed, he crosses this Maya, and carries also the whole world across it.

*Notes.*—It is this man, who has obtained this unalloyed love for God,

that crosses the ocean of Samsara. It is only he who can help others to cross.

It will be seen, from a perusal of the above account of Narada of the

various practices necessary for crossing the ocean of Samsara, that it practically follows the order given by Bhagavan towards the end of the Bhagavadgita, XVIII: 51 to 54.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Hindu Scriptures:** *Edited by Nichol Macnicol. Everyman's Library. Published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 10-13 Bedford Street, London W.C. 2, England. Pages 287.*

This edition of Hindu Scriptures comprises the English translations of select hymns from the Rigveda, of five Upanishads—the Brihadaranyaka, the Chandogya, the Katha, the Isa, and the Swetasvatara—and of the Bhagavad Gita. These translations are taken from well-known publications like the Sacred Books of the East, and have been done by well-known orientalists of Europe. There is also a Foreword by Rabindra Nath Tagore, and an instructive Introduction by the Editor.

The value of the book consists in its bringing together many of the important Hindu Scriptures in a single attractive, handy and cheap volume.

**Prayers, Praises and Psalms:** *Translated by Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A. Ph.D. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pages 612. Price Rs. 1-4-0.*

We have in the volume under review well-selected and representative collection of devotional verses from Sanskrit literature with English translations. The selections are drawn from the whole field of Sanskrit literature—Vedic, Epic, Puranic, Tantric, Kavya poetry, and the compositions of Acharyas and individual devotee singers. The translations are accurate and make pleasant reading.

The special value of the book lies in that it brings together into one handy volume, a vast number of devotional verses that are otherwise inaccessible to general readers since they lie scattered in a vast body of literature dealing with a variety of subjects. It will therefore be found very useful by Hindu devotees, while non-Hindu students of religion will find in it a good help to come into contact with the spirit

and quality of Hindu devotion. The value of the volume is enhanced by an exhaustive Index and informative Glossary.

**Srividya Saparya Paddhati :** (Sanskrit) *Compiled by Brahmashri N. Subramania Iyer. Published by Sri Brahma Vidya Vimarsini Sabha, Madras. Pages 168. Price Rs. 2-0-0.*

This book gives a detailed account of the procedure to be followed and the Mantras and the hymns to be chanted in connection with the worship of Sri Vidya. Sri Vidya is only another name for the Divine Mother, Who is the same as the non-dual Reality in its relative aspect. The spiritual tradition of India maintains that the worship of the Divine Mother with faith and devotion is an unsailing means of attaining both the material and spiritual ends of life.

The heartfelt gratitude of all devotees of the Divine Mother, especially of those who worship Her daily according to strict ritualistic procedure, will be with the learned editor who has spared no pains in collating rare manuscripts and presenting for the first time, a reliable and well-arranged printed edition of Srividya Saparya Paddhati. He has done well in adding to this edition, the famous Lalita Sahasranama, which is perhaps the most beautiful and inspiring among the Sahasranamas. The printing and get-up of the book are quite nice.

**The Songs of Thyagaraja :** *By Dr. C. Narayana Rao. Copies can be had at Atreyasrama, Anantapur. Price Rs. 2-0-0. Pages 165.*

Thyagaraja is one of the greatest of geniuses and benefactors of humanity that India has ever produced. He lived in the early half of the 18th century, and devoted his whole life to the service of God and

culture of devotion through music. He was a saint, a composer and singer in one, and consequently his life's Sadhana through the composition and singing of devotional songs in Telugu, one of the most musical languages of India, resulted not only in the development of his own spiritual life, but in creating a rich heritage of soul-stirring devotional songs and a valuable musical tradition for the people of South India. He is the one living force in the musical life of South India even today, and few cultured men of South India will disown the part he has played in educating their mind in higher ideals of life.

Mr. Narayana Rao's translation of seventy-seven select songs of Thyagaraja into English will be highly appreciated by all lovers of Indian culture who have no access to the Telugu original. He has done well in giving also the original songs in Roman characters with diacritical marks.

**The Religions of the World.** Vols. I & II. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Calcutta, 15, College Square, Calcutta. Copies can be had of Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pages 1044. Price Vols. I & II, Rs. 10.

These two volumes give us a permanent record of all the proceedings of the memorable Parliament of Religions held at Calcutta in March, 1937, in connection with the first birth centenary of Sri Ramakrishna. Besides the programme of the Parliament, the address of the chairman of the Reception Committee, greetings from the delegates, messages from distinguished philosophers and religious heads, and farewell addresses, the volumes contain the fifteen presidential addresses delivered at the different sessions, and either the full text or resumes of one hundred and ten papers presented and lectures delivered in the course of the different sittings of the Parliament. These lectures are classified into eight groups: (1) The Ideas of Religion, (2) Religion and culture, (3) The Religious systems of the World, (4) Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, (5) Religion and Philosophy, (6) Religion and Social Service, (7) Historical, Comparative and other Studies of Religion, and (8) Religion and Current Problems.

Among the writers one comes across the names of distinguished scholars belonging to different countries and universities of the world, and of the representatives of all the important world religions and religious movements of today.

A book of this kind, in which the best men of different countries and cultures have pooled their mental resources with a view to solve the ultimate riddle of existence and promote the cause of the 'good life' on earth, is indeed a genuine form of intellectual co-operation, of which we hear so much now-a-days. Men all the world over are today looking for a new lead in their collective life. They feel that statesmen and economists have miserably failed them. Ever since the modern scientific era began, people had transferred their faith and allegiance from religious to secular leadership, in the hope that the latter will rectify the ills that the fanaticism and narrowness of priests and churches had wrought in the days of their supremacy. But the selfishness and blind folly of nationalists and imperialists, as well as the constant state of unrest and nervous tension to which the conflicting political ideologies of our times have reduced the world, are forcing thoughtful minds everywhere to look to religion once again for a new light and a new inspiration.

But the old fanaticism and narrowness of the churches and dogmas will not do for the new age. Enlightened minds will have no charm for them. Only a study of comparative religion and philosophy, not from a mere academic interest but with faith in the divinity of man and the living truth of all the religions, will suit the needs of our times.

The volumes under review form a substantial contribution in this respect. Few publications in modern times are so useful as these in promoting world understanding and spiritual leaderships through a study of comparative religion. They meet the needs of all who are interested in religion, whether it be from an intellectual or practical point of view.

**The Gita Rahasya or The Fundamental of Life and Living:** By a Sadhu. Published by the Sanathana Dharma Publishing House Ltd., Ernakulam. Price: Rs. 1-8-0. Pages 118+412.

This exhaustive work is an illuminating presentation of the teachings of the Gita. Within the first 175 pages the author gives the translation of the texts with elaborate foot notes; then follows the exposition of the teachings of the Gita bringing out at the same time their practical bearings on the present-day problems of the world. One chapter is devoted to the appropriate sayings of Sri Ramakrishna on various problems of spiritual life. The glossary at the end is very helpful.

**My Father in Heaven:** *By Narayana Kausika. To be had of N. G. V. Aiyar, Nemmara (Cochin), South India. Price Rs. 2-4-0 (India), 5 sh. net. (Foreign). Pp. 269.*

Mr. Kausika's work, *The New Evolution*—the first of a well-planned series—was reviewed sometime back in these pages. The book under review is the second one of the series. Herein, some ways and means have been suggested to ensure the evolution of human civilization to a higher stage when much of the anomalies, stress and strain and conflicts of interests of the modern world can be eliminated. He hopes to achieve success mainly through universal religion or Dharma suited to our age and through world-state organisation controlling national and racial ideals and activities.

**The Gospel of the Gita:** *By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri. To be had of the author or the Dharmarajya office, Chandni Chowk, Delhi. Price, annas three; annas two (for students). Pages 54.*

In this brochure the learned writer has narrated the superb story of the Gita in a very lucid style so as to make its message accessible to the Hindu boys and girls. He has therefore given due emphasis on all the salient points in that inspiring dialogue between Sri Krishna, the divine man, and Arjuna, the great warrior. We wish this booklet a wide circulation.

**The Heart Doctrine of Sri Bhagavad Gita and its Message:** *By R. Vasudeva Row, assisted by T. M. Janardanam. Published for Suddha Dharma Mandal Association. To be had of Suddha Dharma Office, Mylapore, Madras.*

In the compass of this small book an attempt has been made by the author to summarise the view-point of the Suddha School of Elders in respect of Sri Bhagavad Gita. The notable feature of the presentation is that the original Slokas have been classified under several topical heads bearing on some of the outstanding problems of spiritual enquiry.

The book is available free to one and all on payment of four annas stamps as postage.

**1. Sai Baba; 2. Sage of Sakori (2nd Ed.):** *By B.V. Narasimhaswami. Copies to be had at Sunday Times Bookshop 21, Errabalu Chetty Street, Broadway, Madras. Pages 128 & 248; Price 6 annas and 8 annas (wrapper) respectively.*

The first of these books deals with the life of a sage of Western India, who passed away a few years back. The second deals with another living saint, the disciple of the first. Besides the life sketch, character portrayal, and essential teachings of these sages, these books, especially the first, contain a vast collection of the experiences and reminiscences of the devotees of the sages. These are no doubt, given for strengthening the faith and devotion of the readers, and to present an impressive picture of the personages dealt with.

The most striking feature of these books is the abundance of miracles in them, and the queerness and sometimes the repulsiveness of certain aspects of the lives represented therein. India has from time immemorial been the land of saints and sages, and Indians generally venerate men who are considered to be of this category without applying their critical intelligence. This has got its good as well as bad effects, and both these are certainly visible in the books under review. One feels, however, greatful to Sri Narasimha-swamy for all the pains he has taken to investigate into the facts relating to the lives of these personages and to popularise these figures so little known in several parts of the country, as well as for providing the scholars with material for a study of contemporary Indian mysticism in its strength as well as weakness.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### The Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon.

*The report of the Society from September, 1937 to August, 1938:* The Season's activities were resumed with the opening of the Sunday services in the Vedic Temple in the evening, on September 12, 1937. In the mornings, Swami Devatmananda spoke on practical and devotional subjects, and in the evenings, he dwelt on general psychological and metaphysical topics. The regular half-hour meditation before the sermons were also duly conducted as an important feature of the Sunday Services. The Swami gave the following course of ten lectures on Ethics, on Sunday Evening: (1) Ethics, Its Scope and Relations to Sciences, (2) The Moral Standard as Law, (3) The Supremacy of the Moral Standard, (4) Virtue and Wisdom, (5) Moral Sentiments and Sanctions, (6) Is Pleasure our highest Good? (7) The Ethical Standard of Perfection, (8) Supreme Happiness as the Ideal of Life, (9) The Critical Ethics of Kant and Vedanta, and (10) Morality, In Theory and Practice.

The weekly study classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays were also held at 8 o'clock, in the Vedic Temple, "Sri Krishna and Uddhava," being studied on Tuesdays and "Vivekachudamani" on Thursdays. The regular half-hour meditation before the Thursday class was also conducted. Besides these Services and classes, Durga Puja, the Birth anniversaries of Jesus Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Lord Buddha were fittingly observed with special devotional Services. The New Year's Eve midnight Service also was duly conducted with meditation and silent communion. The Twelfth Anniversary of the founding of the Society was marked with the presentation of a playlet entitled "The Pilgrim Returns" written and managed by the friends and members of the Society. The Annual General meeting of the Society was held in October, 1937, when the Board of Trustees was elected for the ensuing year.

The Women's League met from time to time, and conducted their meetings. The added feature of the League is the study

circle, in which various members present short notes on topics of current interest, such as, music, art, travel, social welfare, science, etc. Speakers also are invited to address the League on instructive subjects.

The work of the Ashrama has been steadily progressing with the generous help rendered by the friends and members. One member is staying there and looking after it, while others make frequent trips and execute various large-scale improvements. Thus, in the year under review, a permanent water-system with a pipe lay-out of about 1,500 ft. has been completed, and a twelve-feet wide road covering a total length of about 1,500 ft. has been cleared, graded and gravelled. Besides, a new cabin for the use of the Swamis has been built. All the labour for such improvements is being kindly and voluntarily given by the members and friends of the Society. Special mention has to be made of the generous help the county is rendering by building the County Road (leading from the Highway) with the help of thousands of dollars of the Federal Fund.

On the 4th of July, an oak tree was dedicated with special ceremony, in memory of late Swami Gnaneswarananda, who, with Swami Vividishananda, visited the Society as also the Ashrama, in the summer of 1937. This year, the activities of the society were suspended for a summer recess, one month ahead of time, enabling Swami Devatmananda to make a trip to Hollywood and San Francisco, and attend the dedications of the new Temple of the Master in Hollywood, and the Ashrama at Lake Tahoe, Calif.

The most pleasant event that brought the season's activities to a successful close, was the visit of Swami Prabhavananda, the Founder-Head of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood and also the Founder of the Portland Centre. He paid a short visit to Portland, after an absence of more than six years. He spoke twice, once in the Masonic Temple before a large and appreciative audience, and another time at the Ashrama in connection with its third Anniversary celebration.

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THE HINDU IDEAL OF KINGSHIP

ALONG with other ancient people the Hindus also believed in the divinity of kings; but no other nation has such an exalted ethical ideal of kingship. The following extracts give a fairly good picture of that ideal. They are instructive and interesting to us of present-day India.

सकर्तं प्राप्येषु भोगेषु कामदृतं महीपतिम् । लुब्धं न बहु मन्यते श्मशानमिमिक प्रजाः ॥  
स्वयं कार्याणि यः काले नानुतिष्ठति पार्थिवः । स तु वै सह राज्येन तैश्च कार्येविनश्यति ॥  
ये न रक्षन्ति विषयमस्वाधीना नराधिपाः । ते न वृद्धा प्रकाशन्ते गिरयः सागरे यथा ॥  
यस्मात् पश्यन्ति दूरस्थान् सर्वान्यर्थं नराधिपाः । चारेण तस्मादुच्यन्ते राजानो दीर्घच्छ्रुषः ॥  
तीक्ष्णमल्पप्रदातारं प्रमत्तं गर्वितं शठम् । व्यसने सर्वभृतानि नाभिधावन्ति पार्थिवम् ॥  
अतिमानिनमप्राणमात्मसंभावितं नरम् । क्रोधनं व्यसने हन्ति स्वजनोऽपि महीपतिम् ॥  
उपभुक्तं यगा वासः सजो वा मृदिता यथा । एवं राज्यात् परिश्रष्टः समर्थोऽपि निरर्थकः ॥  
अप्रमत्तश्च यो राजा सवंज्ञो विजितेन्द्रियः । कृतज्ञो धर्मशीलश्च स राजा तिष्ठते चिरम् ॥

A greedy ruler who is given to sensual pleasures and who acts at his own sweet-will is detested by the subjects just like a cremation fire. A king who does not personally attend to his duties soon sees the end of himself and his plans. Having lost the power for self-determination, the king who does not take proper care of his kingdom cannot shine in prosperity, even as a chain of mountains submerged in the ocean. It is said, kings have a far-reaching vision. Why? Because they could foresee distant calamities with the aid of spies. To a harsh, stingy, careless, arrogant, stubborn king nobody would flee for help even at the time of consuming anxiety. A ruler who is overbearing, evasive, conceited and habitually wrathful is exposed to mortal danger even from his very kinsmen. And a ruler bereft of rulership, although he may possess abilities, is as worthless as a rejected cloth or used garland of flowers. That ruler alone can be stable in his State, who is full of zeal, who understands all, who controls his senses, who is grateful to others and who abides in divine Law.

*From Valmiki's Ramayana, Bk. III, Ch. 33.*

## AN ADDRESS

BY SWAMI VIRAJANANDA\*

*Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer, Friends and Fellow Workers of Madras,*

*It is a source of genuine joy to me to be in your midst to-day and participate in this function of the opening of the Ramakrishna Centenary Library.*

*A living tree puts forth fresh leaves every day; so a living organisation never stops work but ever strives onward in deeds of service. The mighty tree of the Ramakrishna Order, which we of this generation have been privileged to watch growing under our eyes, and which we in our own way have been privileged to water and nourish—this tree is putting forth new shoots, day after day, in the shape of increasingly useful institutions for the service of man.*

*Said Sri Krishna to his comrades, while walking through a lovely forest, "Look at these trees. Don't they seem to live for the single object of doing good to others? Themselves bearing heat and cold, wind and rain, and never complaining, they stand there ever ready to comfort those who seek their shelter. They afford sustenance to numerous creatures, and none ever goes away from them disappointed. With leaves, blossoms, fruit, shade, root, bark, branches, sprout, shoot and seed, they fulfil the varied desires of various beings. Such doing of good with body, mind and soul and all that belongs to one is the 'summum bonum' of life on earth."*

*It is the cherished aim of the Ramakrishna Mission to serve humanity like the tree pictured by Sri Krishna. You will again recall how with the Vedic seers He likens Life to a tree with root at the top and branches at the bottom. These various institutions bearing the name of Sri Ramakrishna, which we see sprouting up and flourishing around us, have their root all above in Him; and so long as they draw sustenance from that Source, they are sure to prosper and grow from more to more.*

*That is the idea we have to bear in mind in all our work. When works of service are understood and carried on in that spirit, the worker need not be apologetic for the littleness of his efforts, or be frightened by the magnitude of other undertakings around him, compared with which, his own might seem to sink into insignificance. Our work is a love offering to the God in man; and that is our justification for opening this small library in the premier city of the Presidency which has got many big and up-to-date libraries. I hope, in spite of its smallness, this small library will have an individuality of its own and will carve out a distinct place for itself in this part of the city. This library will not only afford book-learning but will also inspire its readers to seek the end of all learning. If it is for one's own salvation—to kill one's own Ahankara—one word, one saying, one sign in proper time and place is enough; but when it is a question of carrying conviction to others, of building up an organisation for team work, for common spiritual striving, books, lectures and libraries become indispensable. As Sri*

\*This forms the speech delivered by the Swamiji on the occasion of the opening of the Centenary Library, Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

Ramakrishna used to say, to kill oneself, a pin would do, but to conquer others, swords and arms become necessary. This library, I am sure, will fulfil a real want, and it will not only prove a source of unfailing joy, comfort and guidance to numerous seekers on the path of Truth, but also serve as an armoury to the soldiers of peace who belong to the Order. Its setting between a monastery and a dispensary, signifying inward meditation fructifying in acts of outward service, may not be a mere accident but perhaps the fulfilment of a divine plan, thereby not only to inspire those who enter its precincts with noble thoughts but also to impart to them the courage to live up to those thoughts through deeds of service.

It occurs to me also that this library may be the starting ground for the realization of yet another of Swami Vivekananda's cherished dreams to which he gave fervent expression while addressing audiences in this city forty years ago. He wanted a well-established and well-equipped training centre for workers aspiring to serve mankind. Though numerous Homes and orphanages, hospitals and dispensaries, Maths and Ashrams, have sprung up in response to his clarion call, the idea of the kind of training centre for young workers he had in mind is yet unrealised. In Mysore, in Bhubaneswar, in Calcutta and other places, efforts are in various stages of progress in this direction; Study Circles have been started for Brahmacharins and Sannyasins, libraries of choice books are being built up, and men of deep learning and experience are being invited to guide these undertakings.

In Madras itself, no conscious effort in that direction was made till now, though this Math has sponsored and helped in bringing into existence several institutions in Madras and the neighbouring States, in Ceylon, Burma and F.M.S., and has served as the training ground for nearly half of our Sannyasins working in far off places in Europe and the Americas. And now with a purposeful planning, with the possession of a good library and with the co-operation of men of light and learning, I hope the day may not be far off when Madras will have a Vedanta College for training future workers.

The pursuit of truth and the imparting of knowledge is according to the Gita, 'jnana-yajna,' and that is the highest form of sacrifice. Those who write and publish books, those who collect and spread their use, those who teach and explain them, those who study them with devotion to truth and those who help by gifts in cash or kind to make the undertaking prosper—all are participants in this 'yajna'; and Bhagavan says that every work inspired by such a spirit becomes a sacrifice more acceptable to God than offering of oblations in the fire or bringing of gifts to an altar.

With these brief observations, I accept the gift of this Centenary Library from the citizens of Madras as represented by the Centenary Celebration Committee, and declare the new building open, invoking the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna on all.

**MAY HE LEAD US FROM THE UNREAL TO THE REAL,  
FROM DARKNESS UNTO LIGHT,  
FROM DEATH UNTO IMMORTALITY.**

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DISCIPLE

[In these reminiscences of this great woman of modern India; the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life.—The Editors.]

It was seven o'clock in the morning. The Holy Mother was seated on the floor near her couch. Swami Nirbhayananda who had gone to Dwaraka on pilgrimage, sent the Mother the *prasadam* from the shrine of Dattatreya in the Girnar Hills. The Mother asked, "Who was Dattatreya?"

Disciple: He, like Jāda-Bharata and others, was a great sage (Brahmarshi), an Iswarakoti.

Mother: Like the children of the Master? These devotees are also Iswarakotis, are they not? The Master pointed out Yogen as Arjuna. He brought Swamiji down from the plane of the "Seven Sages." About Baburam he said that he had an unstained noble lineage. He made similar remarks about Niranjana, Purna and Rakhal.

Disciple: And also about Tarak of Belgharia.

Mother: Yes. And also about Bhavanath. He used to speak of him as the female counterpart (Prakriti) of Narendra (Swami Vivekananda). Did he say anything about Sarat?

Disciple: I do not know. Tell me about the other disciples of the Master.

Mother: I do not know more. He did not speak of Sarat as an Iswarakoti.

Disciple: But you once said, "Sarat and Yogen belong to my inner circle." Well, how is it that some of

the Iswarakotis are thus immersed in worldliness with their wives and children?

Mother: Yes, they are rotting there. Purna was forced to marry. His relatives threatened him, saying, "If you go to him (referring to Sri Ramakrishna) we will smash his carriage with stones and brick-bats when he comes to Calcutta."

Disciple: Well, they might have married. Nag Mahasaya also married. But to have children and lead a worldly life!

Mother: Perhaps they had some such desires. Let me tell you one thing. There is a great complexity in this creation. The Master does one thing through one man, and another thing through another person. Oh, it is so inscrutable! But even a householder can be an Iswarakoti. What is the harm?

Radhu was ill. She had pain and fever. The Mother was worried about her. She said, "She cannot get well, when I am alive. Who will look after her when I am gone? Will she live then?"

Disciple: What a crowd of devotees for the whole day! You could not get a moment's respite.

Mother: Day and night I say to the Master, "Please lessen this rush. Let me have a little rest." But I hardly get it. It will be like this for the few days I am in this body. The message of the Master has spread

everywhere; therefore so many people come here. What a crowd I met in Bangalore. People began to shower flowers as I got down from the train. Flowers lay high on the road. Such a crowd used to visit the Master also during his last days. I try to persuade people so earnestly, saying, "Have your initiation from the family preceptor (Kula-Guru). They expect something from you. I do not expect anything." But they will not leave me. They weep and it moves my heart. Well, I am nearing the end; the few days I shall live will be spent like this.

Disciple: O Mother! No, no. Why should you say that? You are well. You have no particular ailment. Why do you, then, want to leave this world? Never say that again.

At that time the Mother appeared very sad and indifferent about things.

Downstairs Golap-Ma was arguing with someone.

Mother: What is the discussion going on downstairs?

Disciple: It is Golap-Ma who is shouting.

Mother: One should not lose oneself in discussion. One suffers if one reflects on evil alone. Golap has lost her delicacy by insisting on truth-telling. But I can never give up my delicacy. "One must never speak an unpleasant truth."

On another occasion, Golap-Ma had told someone an unpleasant truth. The Holy Mother had said to her, "How is that, Golap? What a nature you have!"

During the noon-time a hot-headed man had come to the Holy Mother and created a row. Referring to this, she said, "The Master did not let anybody know of my existence. He

protected me always with infinite care. Now the thing has gone to the other extreme; they are advertising me, as if by the beat of a drum in a market-place. M—is at the root of it all. People are beside themselves after reading the "Kathamrita" ("The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna"). Girish Babu enforced his demands upon the Master and abused him; even so people are doing the same thing to me.

"Why should they always bother me about initiation? There are my children (referring to the direct disciples of the Master) in the Belur Math. Have they no power? Everyone is being sent here. I went so far as to tell people that they would be incurring great sin in giving up their hereditary preceptor. But still they would not leave me alone."

Disciple: You initiate the devotees because you desire to do so.

Mother: No, I do so out of compassion. They won't leave me. They weep. I feel compassion for them. Out of kindness I give them initiation. Besides, what do I gain by it? When I initiate devotees, I have to accept their sins. Then I think, "Well, this body will die any way, let them realize Truth."

It was half-past one in the afternoon. After the midday meal, I went upstairs to get the betel-leaf when I heard the Holy Mother repeating a verse with reference to someone.

Disciple: Mother! What does it mean?

Mother: Man cannot change his nature. Chaitanya Deva said, "I adore him who worships me having given up his old nature."

Disciple: Once you remarked at Jayramvati referring to a devotee, "One should try to change his old nature." Another day you said, "Some people have such sweet natures that I feel like loving them at the very first sight. But towards some I have no positive feeling."

Mother: You are right, my child. It is true. Inborn nature is everything. What else is there?

Disciple: Sarat Maharaj said referring to Golap-Ma, "If she wants to talk to a man, she shouts as loudly as if she were talking to the entire house."

Mother: Yes. What a strange nature they have developed. Even a trifling makes them cry and shout. Everybody is disturbed. Yogen-Ma was a different person before. She was steady and patient. But how she has changed! My child! Patience is the greatest virtue. There is nothing greater than patience.

I had a bad headache and I went up stairs at four o'clock in the afternoon to tell the Holy Mother about the headache. "Perhaps", she remarked, "it is due to heat." She quickly mixed clarified butter and camphor with water on a leaf and began to rub it on my entire forehead. She said, "When the Master had a headache he used to apply this medicine." I also felt better after a few minutes' rubbing. I came downstairs. Very shortly, I was relieved of the pain and reported it to her.

A white woman, from Poland, came to the Udbodhan office to visit the Holy Mother. She had come to India

to learn the Vedanta philosophy. She had learned about the Holy Mother in Calcutta and therefore came to pay her respects to her. They talked together for a few minutes. Referring to the Bahai sect, the woman said that its teachings regarding the harmony of religions, resembled that of Sri Ramakrishna. It appeared to us that she was a Bahai.

After the Polish woman had taken leave, I said to the Mother, "How did you find her?"

Mother: Very nice, indeed.

Disciple: She has come from a great distance. Poland belongs to Russia. You have heard about the Russo-Japanese war. Poland is under Russia.

Mother: Does she then belong to Russia? I have heard that the Russians are great fighters. She has come here to learn religion. She spent three or four months in Ceylon.

Disciple: Now the news of the Master has spread everywhere. Where is Poland and where is the Udbodhan office! You can hardly comprehend it, Mother!

Mother: The Master said in a state of ecstasy, "Hereafter I shall be well-liked in every house. There is no limit or end to my devotees." Nivedita once said to me, "Mother! We are also Bengalees. Only through the misfortune of bad Karma we have been born in another country. You will see that we too shall be exactly like the Bengalees." It is their (referring to Nivedita and others) last birth.

## THE CULT OF BHAKTI IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

BY PROF. JADUNATH SINHA, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S.

[Dr. Sinha is the author of *Indian Psychology: Perception* and *Indian Realism* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London), the two outstanding books on those respective subjects. A lucid and delightful study of the devotional and ethical import of the Gita, with some interesting reference to modern Ethics forms the theme of the present article.]

### IMMANENCE OF GOD IN MAN—No HUMAN FREEDOM

THE Mahabharata teaches the immanence of God in man and Nature. The Bhagavad-Gita teaches more emphatically that God is the all pervading Spirit in the whole universe. He resides in the hearts of all creatures as their inner Soul. They are mere instruments of His will. He uses them as He pleases. He sets them going by His own Maya or creative power. (xiii, 61.) He is the immanent spirit in man. He is the only agent who acts in all our actions. He is the creator of Sattva (illumination), Rajas (energy), and Tamas (inertia), which constitute the innate nature of man. These natural 'drives' are the only springs of human actions. There is no freedom of human will. The sense of human freedom is due to egoism, Ahamkara. We are deluded by egoism and look upon ourselves as free agents (xiii, 27). But, in fact, we have no creative power. We cannot freely initiate any of our actions. All our actions are actuated by natural impulses. And these spring from the inscrutable nature (Maya) of God. So ultimately God is the real agent of all our actions. No one can remain inactive even for a single moment. But all his actions are beyond his control; they spring out of his

natural impulses (Gunas) which are implanted in him by God. (iii, 5.)

### COMPLETE SURRENDER TO GOD

We have no freedom of will. Our vaunted freedom is mere self-conceit due to egoism. So the paramount duty of an aspirant is to purge himself of his egoism and become a *conscious* instrument of the Divine Will. We are instruments of the Divine Will. But we do not know it owing to ignorance (Avidya). Our ignorance is due to egoism (Ahamkara). Egoism clings to human nature. It assumes subtler and subtler forms in the course of our spiritual progress and tries to deceive us. This almost ineradicable egoism stands in the way of our realisation of the Divine power within us. Egoism is a barrier between man and God. It obstructs the flow of Divine power into men. It obstructs perfect communion of the human spirit with the Divine. Shake off egoism and realise your unison with God.

We must purge off this egoism and merge our will completely in the Divine Will. We must have no will of our own apart from the will of God. We must surrender our will completely to the Divine Will. Our whole being must pulsate with the Divine will. We must negate our merely individual will and be a conscious instrument of the Divine Will. We must

live, move, and have our being in God. We must cease to live our own individual life so that the Lord may live in us. The human will thus attuned to the Divine Will moves with the spontaneity of Divine life.<sup>1</sup>

#### PRAPATTI OR COMPLETE RESIGNATION TO GOD

Complete resignation to God or taking refuge in Him is the easiest means of self-control and attainment of holiness. It is not mere passive surrender to the inevitable. It is not blind fatalism. It is knowing and loving surrender to the God of light and love. It is taking shelter in Him (Prapatti). It is opening the soul to His wisdom and love. When we lose ourselves in God and seek His light, love and guidance, our intellect is enlightened by His wisdom, our heart is flooded by His love and we become conscious instruments of His will.

There is no human freedom. How, then, can we control our passions? The Bhagavad-Gita teaches that taking refuge in God (Prapatti) is the easiest and most effective means of self-control. "Many aspirants, taking refuge in God, and being suffused with His spirit, shake off all attachment, fear and anger, and being purified by true knowledge, attain kinship with Him" (iv, 10). It is difficult to control our passions, directly. If we concentrate our attention on them and try to suppress them directly, they

may gather volume and strength and overpower our mind and invade the whole field of consciousness. So our attention should be fixed on God, the holiest, the noblest, and the best, so that the baser passions of our nature may gradually be transformed into a passion for the Holy. The teaching of the Gita is in perfect accord with the teaching of modern psychology and ethics. Mackenzie says: "It is generally better to escape from our defects, not by thinking about them and trying to elude them, but by fixing our attention on the opposite excellences (cf. *pratipakshabharana*). It certainly seems to be a more effectual method, as a rule, to expel our evil propensities by developing good ones rather than by seeking directly to crush the evil ones." (1 *Manual of Ethics*, p. 341.) "The effort to suppress all natural desires (directly) frequently defeats its own aim. It concentrates attention on the objects of desire, and in a sense makes a man the slave of his desires as truly as in the case of him who yields to them. The best way to free ourselves from our lower desires is to interest ourselves in something better. It is only into a mind swept and garnished that the devils can enter. When it is well furnished and occupied they can find no room." (*Ibid*, pp. 358-59). God is the noblest and the best. So if we fix our minds on Him and seek shelter in Him, our passions will lose their strength and easily submit to our will.

Sattva (purity), Rajas (energy), and Tamas (inertia) constitute human nature. No one can completely transcend these natural impulses (Gunas) because they form our innate nature. No one can transcend them

<sup>1</sup> "It is a Divine Spirit which animates and inspires it. In all its activities it is a Divine Will that moves it. Every pulse beat of its life is the expression and realisation of the life of God." (John Caird: *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 286).

and attain liberation by his own efforts. "They alone can transcend Maya with its threefold qualities of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, who take refuge in Me." (vii, 14). Self-surrender to God is the easiest means of overcoming the inherent limitations of human nature. "One who serves God with undivided devotion and love completely transcends the three-fold innate nature and acquires fitness for attaining kinship with Divine nature, for He alone is immortal, immutable, and the eternal fountain of transcendental bliss." (xv, 26-27). Narada also enjoins the same method of self-conquest. "We should dedicate all our actions to God, and divert the course of all our passions, desire, anger, egoism, and the like to Him." (Narada Sutras 64.) "It is almost impossible to suppress all desires and passions. We can only divert their course. Naturally they are directed towards earthly objects. But they should be directed towards God. When they are directed to God they are transformed by the magic touch of God. Desires should not be suppressed or extinguished. They should be fulfilled in God. God alone should be the object of all our desires."<sup>2</sup>

Prapatti or taking refuge in God is the easiest means of attaining beatitude. The Lord says: "God dwells in the hearts of all creatures and revolves them as His instruments by His Maya or inscrutable power. So throw yourself with all your being on Him for shelter. By His grace you shall obtain supreme peace and the ever-lasting place or

beatitude." (xviii, 61-62.) "Fix thy mind on Me, be my devotee, sacrifice unto me, prostrate thyself to me; and thou shalt come to Me; I give thee my word of promise, thou art dear to me. Give up all thy duties, (dharma) and come unto Me for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins." (xviii, 65-66.)

#### LIFE OF ACTION DEDICATED TO GOD

"A life of devotion is not necessarily a life of inaction. The Gita calls upon us to give up weakness of the heart, shake off lethargy and impotency, and do our duties in the world. (ii, 3.) We must not give up all actions. In fact we can never do it; we are driven to act by natural inclination. (iii, 5.) We cannot even maintain our life without actions. (iii, 8.) We should do our duties without attachment. (iii, 19). We should not care for success or failure. (ii, 38.) We have right to actions, but not to their fruits or consequences which are beyond our control. (ii, 47.) We should surrender the fruits of actions to God. Whatever we do, whatever we eat, whatever we give in charity, whatever sacrifices we make, and whatever penances we undergo, we must dedicate all these to God. (ix, 27.) We must live an active life completely dedicated to God."<sup>3</sup>

No one can remain inactive even for a single moment. He is driven to activity by his natural impulses. (iii, 5). He cannot even maintain his life without actions. (xviii, 11.) Action is better than inaction. (iii, 8.) Quietism is not necessarily a life of piety. Inaction is very often mistaken for a life of spiritual elevation.

<sup>2</sup>Author's article on "Bhagavata Religion: Cult of Bhakti" in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 55.

But inaction is not a manifestation of Sattva (purity). It is a sign of Tamas, lethargy or inertia. Tamas should be overcome by Rajas; and then Rajas should be overcome by Sattva. Sloth, indolence, and inertia should be overcome by energy and activity. Then all actions should be dedicated to God, and gradually the life of Sattva or purity should be attained.

All actions should be done without attachment. They should not be actuated by any feelings or emotions. (ii, 47; iii, 9, 19.) They should not be performed with any end in view. Duties should not be performed with a view to attaining success or failure, gain or loss, pleasure or pain. (ii, 38, 48.) Duties should be performed for the sake of duty. So far the teaching of the Gita resembles the teaching of Kant. But it differs from it in an essential point. All duties should be dedicated to God. The fruits of all actions should be surrendered to God. Moral life is a life of action completely dedicated to God. Thus the moral life inculcated by the Gita is transformed into a spiritual life based on the firm bed-rock of God. (iii, 30; iv, 24; v, 2, 10-12; vi, 1, 4; ix, 27; xviii, 2, 11, 56.)

The Gita enjoins different kinds of duties in different stations of life. So far its teaching resembles that of Plato. Every one is born in a sphere of moral life. He is born to it and lives in it. He lives, moves, and has his being in a sphere of social organisation. This constitutes his moral universe. His duties are relative to his station in life in this universe. They are strictly determined by his place in the society. His duties are

the duties of the class to which he belongs. If he tries to usurp the duties relating to another sphere of society, his efforts will be in vain, and his moral life will be a life in a vacuum. His moral life is strictly determined by his own aptitudes, heredity, and his immediate social environment. His duties must be in harmony with his inner dispositions, and his station in the social life. (xviii, 41-47.)

The duties of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras have been distributed according to their qualities born of their own natures. (xviii, 41.) The four classes have been created according to their inherent qualities and function in the society. (iv, 13.) Every man reaches perfection by performing his own duty determined by his station in life. (xviii, 45.) Every one worships God by performing his own duty and attains perfection. (xviii 46.) The Lord emphatically says: "Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the well-executed duty of another. He who performs his duty determined by his own nature does not incur sin." (xviii, 47.) "Better one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another, well-performed. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." (iii, 35.)

Thus the Gita strikes an important note of modern Ethics. Bradley has emphasised the conception of "My Station and its Duties."

<sup>4</sup> He says, "To know what a man is we must not take him in isolation. He is one of a people, he was born in a family, he lives in a certain society, in a certain state. What he has to do de-

Mackenzie explains it in a popular way thus: "Human beings do not drop from the clouds. Men are born with particular aptitudes and in a particular environment; and they generally find their sphere of activity marked out for them, within pretty narrow limits. They find themselves fixed in a particular station, helping to carry forward a general system of life; and their chief duties are connected with the effective execution of their work." Hence the force of Carlyle's great principle, "Do the Duty that lies nearest thee." (*Manual of Ethics*, p. 323.) "Thou shalt labour, within thy particular province, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. Work is Worship." (*Ibid.*, p. 309.) Carlyle rightly has said: "All true work is religion."

Action is better than inaction. The Lord Himself sets the goal of action before us. He acts incessantly to set

an example to humanity. He has no goal to achieve. He has no desire to fulfil. He is the eternal embodiment of all perfection, still he acts for the good of mankind. He always acts so that humanity may follow in His footsteps. He is every moment alive to His duties. (iii, 22-23.) He always acts to fight unrighteousness and establish the Kingdom of God on earth. (iv, 7-8.) He invites us all to co-operate with Him in conquering evil and bringing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Let us all fulfil the mission of our life by playing our part well in the world-drama. Let us all be conscious instruments in the hand of God and play in tune with His divine flute and transform this mortal earth into a Divine Order.

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pends on what his place is, what his function is, and that all comes from his station in the organism." (*Ethical Studies*, p. 173.) "There is nothing better than my station and its duties, nor anything higher or more truly beautiful." (*Ibid.*, p. 201.)

(*Not concluded*)

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## THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS

BY DAYAMOY MITRA, M.A.

No sun, no glow of light, no radiant moon I see.  
 The world and heavens all in shadow-shape doth float,  
 O'er mind so faint they float;—this earth and starry world,  
 They rise and dive below, 'gain sink and rise in 'me'.  
 Now slow the shadows fade, in one deep void, they close,  
 But 'me' and 'me' it runs—all other strains are mute,  
 When that too ceases, lo! the silence silence weds  
 Which word nor thought can plumb—He only knows who knows.

This is an English version of Swami Vivekananda's famous Bengali song 'Nahi Surya, Nahi Jyoti' etc. Swamjee describes in it the feeling that the saint has on his way to deep 'Samadhi,' the highest ecstatic bliss, when his senses are in-gathered and a reflux sets on consciousness. Here is poetry of the void—the *vox nihil* of the aspiring soul—so contrary to all that our poets adore of this lovable sensuous world!—Translator.

## THE RELIGION OF THE HINDUS

BY SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA

[Swami Vividishananda of the Sri Ramakrishna Order is in the United States of America for the past few years as a representative of Vedanta and Indian Culture. The salient features of Hinduism are lucidly discussed by him in the following article.—The Editors.]

How old is the religion of the Hindus? It is hard to answer. Historians differ on this point, but they generally agree that it is very very old. Perhaps it is the mother of all religions and dates as far back as prehistoric times when the Aryans migrated from their original home in Central Asia and settled in the fertile valley of the Indus.

The religion of the Hindus draws its inspiration from the Vedas, the most ancient scriptures the world possesses. Literally the word 'Veda' means wisdom, and as wisdom is eternal and universal the Hindus believe that the Vedas are not man-made. They do not come from an individual author or authors. The Vedic sages were but those highly developed souls to whom the Vedic wisdom was revealed.

The Vedas recording the mystic experiences of the ancient seers, furnish the most precious documents which throw a flood of light on these eternal questions which have baffled the human intellect since the dawn of civilization. From a study of the Vedas we find that the ancient seers had a wonderful understanding of the spiritual, moral and physical laws which rule this universe. The origin and nature of man, the origin of the world he sees around him, the idea of God, the relation of man to

God and the world,—all these and other similar questions have been discussed by the seers, and one cannot help admiring the vastness and sublimity of their wisdom and the depth of their spiritual perception.

As the art of writing was unknown in that dim antiquity, the wisdom embodied in the Vedas was handed down from generation to generation by memory, and it was restated and revivified time and again by a galaxy of saints, sages and Divine Incarnations.

As distinguished from other religions, the religion of the Hindus, we must note here, is impersonal, for it does not depend upon a person or persons whose historicity can be doubted; it stands upon the firm foundation of eternal truths. The Vedic sages and the subsequent spiritual leaders of Hinduism are not the founders, giving something new and original, but the discoverers and teachers of eternal truths.

The Hindu religion, like all other religions of the world, had had to pass through several stages of evolution before it attained its present form, and we notice three distinct channels of its expression, namely, philosophy, mythology and ritual. It has a deep philosophical background, a rich fund of mythology and an elaborate system of rituals.

A religion that is not philosophical becomes narrow, fanatical and dogmatic. It cannot stand the scrutiny of reason and is in constant conflict with the other branches of knowledge, namely, the sciences. Similarly, a religion that lacks a mythology becomes too abstract and fails to attract the mass-mind which understands the principles better illustrated by stories and fables. Again, a religion which has a dearth of rituals lacks applicability in life and as such becomes meaningless. Hinduism, because of its wonderful philosophy, mythology and ritual, has been rational, scientific and practical, satisfying all types of human minds. Any unbiased student of the sacred books of the Hindus will bear this out.

The Upanishads, the philosophical portion of the Vedas marking the highest flight of speculation, gave birth to six schools of thought which have become the marvel of scholars. Among others, the ultra-monism of Vedanta and its doctrine of the Divinity of human personality, the pluralism of the Sankhya and its theory of evolution, the higher psychology of the Yoga system, with its technique of spiritual unfoldment through concentration and meditation, and the atomism of Kanada are indeed something that is unique in the history of philosophy.

Let us see what Hinduism has to say about God—the Ultimate Reality, the central theme of every religion. In the Upanishads God has at first been described in a language of negation, for, how can He who is infinite, unconditioned and absolute be at all spoken of by our limited language?

The eyes cannot see Him, nor can the ears hear Him. Beyond the ken of sense-perception, He is also beyond speech and thought. He is above space and time. He is nameless and formless. Yet He is not a non-entity, for He is the substratum of this universe and reveals Himself to a soul purified of all taints. He is our life and soul. He is immanent and transcendent—the Cause of all causes, the One without a second. "The Eternal among non-eternals, the Intelligence of the intelligent, He, though one, fulfills the desires of many. Those wise men who perceive Him through intuition as existing within their own self—to them belongs the peace supreme, and to none else!"

In view of the fact that men representing different stages of evolution and types of temperaments can conceive of God and try to realize Him in their own limited ways, Hinduism recognizes and has room for all phases of religious belief from the Absolutism of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, down to the worship of God in images and symbols. It makes Hinduism extremely tolerant and broad and accounts for the absence of religious fanaticism and persecution in its fold.

Says a great sage: "O Lord, as rivers rising from different mountains run, crooked or straight, towards one ocean, so all these different religions, sects and creeds, rising from different points of view, flow crooked or straight toward Thee, the Infinite Ocean of existence, which is intelligence, bliss and love."

We shall specially note here the three standpoints or approaches to God accepted by Hinduism. They are

but three successive landmarks in the growth of a spiritual aspirant.

In the first stage the aspirant, because of his limited vision and understanding, conceives of God as an extra-cosmic being, far and distant, commanding admiration and worship. This stage marking as it does the spiritual childhood of man leads to the next stage, where there is no distance or separation. God, the Ideal, is no longer separate from the universe and the aspirant. He is the stupendous whole, we are parts. He is, as it were, the living flame, we are so many sparks. He is the total organism, we are the limbs. The universe is His body. He covers everything, interpenetrating every atom of this universe, and yet He is beyond. The second stage admitting unity in variety has its culmination in a final experience where there is absolute unity and identity. The aspirant in that exalted state loses his individuality in God and becomes one with Him. He realizes that he is in essence Divine, omnipotent and omniscient, eternally free and ever-blissful. This experience is the last word of spiritual realization. It is vouchsafed only to a blessed few. Perhaps Christ speaks of this experience of identity when He says: "I and my Father are one."

These three viewpoints have given birth to three distinct schools of philosophy with many subdivisions.

In the West there is the idea that the Hindus are polytheists and idolators. Hinduism does not advocate the worship of many gods, but of one God Who is calle' by many names under different aspects, and He appears to His worshippers taking forms in order to satisfy their

individual desires and needs. Regarding the charge of idolatry we can say that it is wholly a case of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The worship of God in images and symbols prevalent in almost all the great religions of the world is not synonymous with idolatry. It is the kindergarten of the spiritual aspirant. Nobody worships the idol or image as God, but God in and through the idol or image. All the Divine attributes the human intellect cannot comprehend. Some of them are therefore superimposed on the image which is taken as a concrete help for concentrating the mind upon God.

We shall now discuss briefly the doctrine of Karma, the law of cause and effect, or compensation and retribution, and its corollary, the theory of reincarnation. It is one of the fundamentals of Hinduism accepted by all schools of thought. It is a law that accounts for the differences in human nature. It explains the apparent injustices and inequalities we see in this world. As we sow, so we reap. Our present condition, good or bad, is the result of our past actions, and our future will be determined by our present. We are the architects of our own destiny. For our present sufferings let us not throw the blame upon God, calling Him unjust and unkind but take the responsibility upon our own shoulders, facing trials and difficulties in a spirit of resignation and trying to undo the undesirable reactions of our past misdeeds by living here and now a better life. The human soul in its journey towards perfection has to pass through many stages full of varied experiences being incarnated again and again

till it realizes its oneness with God. We lived many many times before, and we shall live many many times hereafter. We had opportunities in the past, and if we could not avail of them and work out our salvation, we shall be given countless opportunities in the future but never condemned to eternal hell-fire.

The masses in India may not understand all the fine metaphysical points involved in their religion, but they live the life and manifest in their actions the virtues religion teaches man to practise. They are truth-loving, self-denying, in-drawn and poised; and thus better fitted to face the problems of life with a philosophic calmness. Although innocent of the letters, they are not uncul-

tured. They have a spiritual background which is enviable. They are familiar with the fundamentals of morality and religion by hearing about God, His incarnations, saints and sages from the professional dramatic troupes giving out religious performances and from individual story-tellers and wandering monks. They are conscious of the transitoriness of this mundane world and look for God-realization as the ultimate object of life. Anyone who is conversant with Indian history and the mystic folk-lyrics sung by peasants and craftsmen will bear witness to this statement.

The following folksong brings out remarkably the spiritual attitude of the Indian masses:

O my mind, let us go back to our own abode.  
 In the foreign land of this world of change  
 Why roam in vain in garments strange?  
 Sense-objects and things material—all aliens.  
 In the love of those who are not thy own  
 Thou shouldst not forsake thy real kith and kin.  
 The path of truth, though rough, steep and dark,  
 Is the path for thee, pilgrim, march on steadily.  
 Let discrimination be the burning torch to guide thy steps,  
 And be sustained by love, pure, true and selfless.  
 It is a treasure that will never fail thee.

When dangers and difficulties beset thy path, do not be afraid.  
 Humbly seek the protection of God—the King of kings,  
 Whose sceptre of justice drives Death himself away.

# THE KEY-NOTE OF EASTERN CULTURE

BY BHIKSHU VAJRABUDDHI

[Rev. Vajrabuddhi is a Buddhist Monk of Ceylon belonging to German nationality. He writes on the distinctive features of Eastern Culture, especially that of India, and draws an interesting contrast with the Culture of the West.]

## I

LIFE as manifested in this world of sound and colour moves on and is never at rest. Therefore world's history represents a varied, living picture of many cultures. Just as the plants, living beings and cultures rise out of the darkness, bloom and laugh in the glimmering light, and disappear, all life is change and novelty—a creative evolution. The fickle dance of life resembles an ever-surging, never-ending sea waving up and down, intensely jubilant, mortally grieved.

Oswald Spengler, the great German historical writer of world-wide fame, studied the various cultures in this light and wrote his well-known book "*The Decline of the West*." If we make a comparative study of the history of the East and the West as two organic cultural entities, it will be perfectly clear to us that this decline is imminent in the process of evolution. But all the same we do not see a great historical philosopher, (I lay stress upon the word 'great') who has earnestly spoken or written anything about a similar, definite, decay or fall of the East and its hoary culture, especially of India and China. Let us critically investigate this point.

It was a doom for Europe and the West that suddenly, more than a thousand years ago, its own hereditary religious and cultural development was arrested almost complete-

ly. By it the whole organic, cultural evolution was disturbed. A quite foreign and heterogeneous church-doctrine—a full distortion of Christ's original, pure and simple message from the East, was intruded on the West and its surprised nations. As history plainly shows us, the new un-Aryan religion has always remained among the Western Aryans a mere external fashion and label. It never struck deep root, never was it able to produce in the West an essentially religious, Christian disposition in the sense of the Great Nazarene. Since that time the soul of the Western culture is disintegrated and unorganic, and naturally, on the whole, became materialistic, violent and practically soulless. That could not be otherwise.

## II

On the other hand it was very fortunate for the East, and India especially, that it had from the very outset its own original, hereditary religion and organic culture in a straight descent. In India, the great illuminators and reformers, in most cases, found suitable conditions awaiting them. The generation to which they came were prepared to respond to their teachings. Indian culture has its foundation in this primeval spiritual wealth which has an unbroken history. Sheltered under

the immortal tree of Vedic thought the Indo-Aryans saw nations and cultures coming and going. There is nothing in the world like the creative and dynamic Sun of Hindustan, the eternal fountain-head of all light, wisdom and love for all. The golden thread of Vedic Idealism runs not only right across Hindu and Buddhistic cultures but also the whole of Asiatic thought.

We can almost say that India's civilising power dates, comparatively speaking, not from time but from eternity; India is very ancient and yet young. India is modern and also creative. At present India is passing through a period of revival. For me, as an European, it is very interesting to see. Very often in Ceylon, and generally in the East, I am gladly reminded of the time-honoured, everyday life and its characteristic features as described plainly and simply in the Christian Bible. It is my firm belief that India and Ceylon preserve great values; they are not without a deep root; they do not live exclusively on the superficial aspects of the modern life. The best men in the East are not dazzled by the mere material glitter of the West. The whole, undivided culture of the East cannot be uprooted so long as it is rooted firmly in the eternal Dharma, which comprehends the modern also. Hence in every century, with no exception of our modern age, the vigorous life of Vedic culture has produced spiritual geniuses, not to speak of leading men in secular fields. The Vedic genius seems to stand in symbolic relation to the high, snow-capped, giant-like peaks of the Himalayas from whose silent

heights the supreme vision of the Oneness of Truth or ultimate Reality has spread throughout the land as the lofty revelations of the Vedas.

The radiant light of universal sympathy and sympathising wisdom of the ancient Rishis and the Great Buddha, brings me to this question: What is the secret of Vedic culture which, sun-like, illuminates mankind in general with a veritable blaze of the Divine Light? What made it possible for India's Message of hope and spiritual dynamism to go out and conquer the vast Asia and impress its stamp on the whole East up to Japan?

One-sided criticism and even censure cannot destroy the imperishable values of a given culture. The spiritual urge of the Indians, like the mental urge of the Greeks has been many-sided, creating relationships between man and his total, rather than merely social, environment, directed by the single purpose of the attainment of a universal point of view. The relationships are not limited to the material world; they extend to the ideal world. There are distinctions in the matter of emphasis over ideas; but the culture of India is ampler, more inward and inclusive, while that of Europe is narrower, more outward, more intellectual and exclusive. Thus the Indian equivalent of 'culture', i.e., Dharma, possesses a wider significance. If European culture may be called primarily social, and practical and rational, Indian culture and art may be considered primarily spiritual and intuitional.

### III

Unity is the keynote of Eastern culture, whether it be of Hinduism or

Buddhism, Taoism or Confucianism. When I speak of Buddhism, I do not have in mind any secretarian religion of a separate order, of a new shed for the sheep. Hinduism and Buddhism are real sisters, off-shoots of the same tree of knowledge; they are essentially one and universal. The mighty, world-shaking spiritual energy and uniting sympathy of any Buddha can never brook any such heresy of separateness or new discrimination. The Buddhas and the Christs came 'not to destroy but to fulfil and to unify.' Even now, in this modern Age of synthesis and search for unity, there is no place for static and dogmatic conceptions of religion.

I repeat it: Unity on principle is the keynote of Eastern culture, especially of Hinduism of Vedanta. In music it has led to the unity of melody rather than the diversity of harmony. In painting it has encouraged the treatment of a single *motif* rather than the complexity of a large group. In the monistic philosophy it has emphasized the supreme vision of the 'One without a second' and the sense of Oneness—of the One undivided Reality and Truth. In poetry unity has found expression in the notion of 'Bhava,' and has therefore made the lyric and the lyric-epic of greater importance than the Drama. In religion it has knit philosophy and ritualism, aesthetics and ethics, in one. As a matter of course, one-pointedness plays an important part in the practice of direct and intuitive meditation. Concentration inspires religion and art for art in itself is an act of creative meditation. Unity has led to an absence of distinctions, which is at once the strength

and weakness of Indian mode of thinking. It has encouraged the Indian mind to ignore the so-called contradictions and paradoxes, and thus miss the advantage of the analytical tradition of the West. But it has rescued the whole Hindu and Buddhist tradition from the internecine conflicts between religion and philosophy, philosophy and art, art and religion and philosophy and life. They are all but names for the One Truth. Therefore, never has India idolized a soulless, dead, world of bare matter and technique, deprived of spirit and spiritual ideals. The spirit of unity craves to contemplate on and to commune and to co-operate with, the One. The strenuous, intuitive contemplation enriches the intellectual, the communion chastens the emotional, and the co-operation with the One inspires the moral nature of man, until the whole personality reaches out for the blissful illumination which brings beauty, freedom and purpose into life.

#### IV

A living, creative religion having a universality of spirit and a culture equally wide, manifests itself in truth, goodness and beauty. A civilising religion must be a power that causes the manifestation of these. This inner urge for higher and higher levels of life which is natural and which never stops, is the cause of all evolution towards perfection. The person who is in possession of the absolute truth alone can be really good. The man who knows the truth realises that he is not an individual or a separate ego-self. He realises that the Soul of his soul is the One—the Nameless and Formless. And he

is therefore essentially one with all, that is, he is God. He will not therefore do what he would if he had thought of himself as an individual pitted against other individuals. He will not set any value on mean sense pleasures or attach any exaggerated importance to worldly possessions and actions. He is in tune with the infinite and must therefore be good. Possession of absolute truth is essential to absolute goodness. Again wherever there is goodness there is harmony, and harmony is the essence of beauty and perfection, lying deep in the hearts of even the worst sinners. Besides, truth is harmony with reality and must, therefore, possess beauty, affecting the mind in subtlest ways.

The intellectual and analytical tendency in the West influenced these three basic categories of *bonum*, *verum* and *pulchrum* to be treated as distinct, and as a result they even came to be looked upon as separate branches of investigation. In India the holy and blissful path to realization is expressed by a single term signifying the completely integrated personality through life, on the strength of goodness, achieved through knowledge or truth, and through joy or beauty. Direct experience and creative concentration has meant a great deal to the spiritual life of the Orient. It is a faculty in the intuitive mind which has inspired and still inspires men to accept life as a term of royal art and apprenticeship for Self-realization. A thoroughly cultured man is a perfect artist of life and has developed all the latent powers of his personality. Only such a man can, in Platonic phraseology, "be the Ideal man

and move with ease and grace in the world of being."

## V

Therefore, wherever religion is a living force, and religion and life are really one, there it finds its natural expression in the full-bloom of a vigorous culture and a strong and healthy art. Nobody can deny that religion forms one of the most important ingredients in the composition of a culture. In fact, religion and life becomes art itself, just as art in its highest attainments becomes religion. Genuine art is the measure for the liveliness of a religion. The highest combination of art and religious life has been realised in past millenniums when artist Yogins and mystics of India materialized their brilliant vision in sculpture and painting, hymn and architecture, philosophy and poetry. So they carried the message of a new civilization all over Asia up to Japan. It is India's most precious heritage in stone dating from silence and eternity. Thereby the East has succeeded in what has never yet been reached by the West: the visible representation or incarnation of the Divine as such. This the well-known German philosopher, Count Kaiserling, had to concede: "I know nothing more grand in this world than the figure of Buddha; it is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirituality in the visible domain."

Unity is the keynote and the unshakable fundamental of Eastern culture, specially of India. One need not have read much of Indian thought in order to appreciate it in all its innermost meaning. It is quite sure, truth is more than what could be

thought, and the very living embodiment of Truth that manifested in its full brilliancy, 2500 years ago, was still greater and more splendid than what one can find in the compiled Pali books of monastic editors. The whole human race has produced but one such wonderful character. There is only one Truth and Ultimate Reality. Lord Buddha is the fulfilment of the Unity and Universalism of the all-embracing Sanatana-Dharma which embodies that Truth. The greatest man ever born, the Buddha was the most correct exponent of the spirit as distinct from the letter of the ancient Vedic religion. His living and dynamic spirit can only be understood by personal and direct experience. The Buddha does not live in books or Pali formulae. Therefore the most important and decisive factor in the Buddha's life is for me nothing but his unique spiritual experience and Enlightenment in the moonlit night of Uruvela. The same enlightenment can come to all, if they be strong and pure morally. The Eternal Light in which you take your refuge is within you. Buddha's spirit is in the very heart of man; it is the very essence, intrinsically pure, by which man rises above, transcends the 'Khandhas' and becomes Divine. Call this experience what you like; it matters not; the thing is to realize it. Practice, and not theory, counts in life; and the touchstone of living

philosophy and religion is, after all, action and realization.

It behoves the adherents of all religions to aspire to become more aware of their common source and to be in accord with the spirit of unity. All 'heresy of separateness' will then vanish. There is only one religion. The expansive power and contagious influence of a new affection is the most potent agent in ousting an old, unhealthy one. I should like to call it 'aggressiveness' in the spiritual sense. We can be united and yet have different opinions. The spiritual genius of the Hindu race—the great mother of many nations and cultures—alone has discovered and realized this important principle. Nothing else really exists but the one Truth. Strip it off the casual label and the personal-colouring of the teacher and then it is seen to be the same Truth.

*In hoc signo vinces.* In this sign the world will be victorious. Then the tree of mankind will produce a luxuriant foliage and plentiful fruitage of ideal characters. We shall be strong as adamant, pure as purity itself, invincible against all tyranny and wickedness. We shall be a power and blessing to the country and humanity, helping the evolution of life.

May we realize that light and wisdom inherent and hidden within us, and radiate it to our fellow-beings!

## RENUNCIATION: A FUNDAMENTAL NEED OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talk given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

### I

JIVAHOOD or the consciousness of being a self separate from God always means pain, bondage and limitation. Without getting rid of Jivahood by attaining Brahman, or realizing the Divine, none can become free. Jivahood brings attachment and all the different forms of so-called human love and hatred, which only mean pain and misery. The Jiva has to undergo the endless cycle of births and deaths so long as he does not realize his true eternal nature. We want freedom and fearlessness. We want to break the limitations of the body and the mind and be free. This we can never attain, so long as we cling to our different desires and passions and animal cravings. Self realization cannot be obtained without the renunciation of all our clinging to body and mind—to our own bodies and minds, as well as to those of others.

Our great sage Sankaracharya says, "A human birth, desire for emancipation and contact with a holy man—these three are very rare and are attained only through the grace of the Lord." But then even these three advantages do not suffice. We must be eager to profit by these three and be willing to sacrifice everything for the higher life. Without paying the full price we cannot become free or fearless; and without fearlessness and freedom there is no happiness

for us neither in this life nor in any future life. All our petty human affections and aversions, all our desires for name and fame, all our clinging to the phenomenon, mean slavery and pain; and so long as we do not realize this clearly, we shall certainly remain the bond-slaves of our senses and passions. Think of Swami Vivekananda's wonderful spirit of renunciation! Try to follow him. Think of him and of all the struggles he had to undergo while his life was being moulded by his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna. All this cannot be gained for nothing. You must be eager to realize something. You must be prepared to sacrifice all your petty feelings and personal desires for the Highest; then alone, one day, the Highest will be yours. Struggle, struggle, struggle. This is the only way. Remember, salvation can be had only in this human birth. In no other birth is it possible to attain to salvation. So Sankara somewhere says, "It is not even desirable for man to attain to the state of a Deva, for even the Devas are slaves to their desires. Therefore the human birth is the best of all births."

In the Katha-Upanishad there is a fine passage that says, "Know that the Self is the master of the chariot—he who sits in it. The body is the chariot. Consider the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as the reins. The senses, they say, are the

horses. The roads are the sense-objects. The wise call him the enjoyer when he is united with the body, senses and the mind." "He who is always of unrestrained mind and devoid of right understanding, his senses become uncontrollable like the wicked horses of the charioteer."

Without practising strict continence in thought, word and deed,—without trying to purify your whole mind, feelings thoughts and actions, nothing will be of any avail. Even the Christian mystics put this period of what they called 'purgation' first. Purity in body and mind is the *sine qua non* of all spiritual life, and whoever is not prepared to pay that price to the full, will fall away from the ideal, sooner or later. This is the relentless law, and it has always been so in all countries.

"He who is always of restrained mind and has right understanding, his senses are controllable like the good horses of the charioteer."

"And he who is devoid of proper understanding, thoughtless and always impure, never attains that goal, and gets into the round of births and deaths."

"But he who is intelligent, ever pure and with the mind controlled, reaches that goal whence none is born again."

"The man who has intelligence for his charioteer and the mind as the well-controlled rein—he attains the end of the journey, that Supreme Place of the Divine." (Katha Upd.)

## II

Renunciation and chastity are necessary. Without these there is no spiritual life. And renunciation means not only outward renun-

ciation, but mental renunciation too. We must renounce all our clinging to our own bodies and minds and to those of others, becoming truly dispassionate and non-attached, in every way. It is not enough if we do this with reference to certain things and persons, while trying to cling to others all the more. Why is renunciation necessary? Why should we have so much renunciation and non-attachment? Spiritual practice can never be successfully performed without giving up all old associations which are not helpful to the aspirants with reference to things and to people. Only to the extent to which we are prepared to renounce our desires and passions and our clinging to others, either in affection or in aversion, can we practise true religion with profit and can any progress be made. Never allow your mind to delude you on this point. The mind always tries to bring forward some plausible reason or other,—why we cannot renounce this or that thing, why we should be in the company of such and such a person, why it is our duty to talk to him or her etc. Never believe your mind in such Cases. It is always out to deceive you and to become the spokesman for your subconscious or half-conscious desires. So we need not only do Japam and prayer and meditation and other spiritual practices but also have renunciation; and only to the extent to which we succeed in having more and more true renunciation and non-attachment, can all these have any effect. When these two are combined, spiritual practices and renunciation, it becomes possible for us to control the mind and begin cleaning

all its dirty nooks and crannies, where we have allowed all kinds of filth to accumulate for ages and ages, through countless births.

Things or persons whom we love, draw the mind, bring attachment, hatred and aversion—love and aversion are only the obverse and the reverse of the self-same coin. Never make any mistake as to this. So they come under the same category. Hatred or aversion is love or attachment turned upside down. It is not something essentially different. We must get rid of all forms of attachment and of all forms of fear by becoming dispassionate, and free from personal likes and dislikes. We must be kind without ever becoming personal, and there should never be any personal claim on anybody or anybody's love; nor should we under any circumstances ever allow anybody to have any personal claim on us or on our affection. Christ says, "He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me," and there is nothing truer than that. But he who allows any other person to love him more than the Divine, is not worthy of the Divine either, and will never attain the Divine, however hard he may try. We only get what we sow, and so long as we go on sowing all these petty affections and hatreds, these likes and dislikes, fettering ourselves and others with the chains of so-called love etc., we shall remain bondslaves, eternally bringing misery on ourselves and on others. Misery will always come. In some cases it comes soon, in others late; but all have to pay for their folly.

Learn to develop the spirit of true non-attachment. Free the mind from

all old associations connected with purely human forms of love and aversion, connected with attachment and sex; for only then will spiritual practices become possible. Everything before that is just an attempt at spiritual practice, and nothing more.

Hatred is as bad as attachment. Hatred is as bad as love or personal affection, in fact, the same thing. Love and hatred are but the two sides of the same coin, as I said before. Never delude yourself into thinking that one is better than the other. Both are fetters and degrade the human being, preventing it from rising to its true stature.

And this is the secret which all who desire to lead a spiritual life should know. There is both love and hatred, and we cannot get rid of them all at once. So what to do? We may keep our love and we may keep our hatred, but we should consciously direct our love only to the Highest, to the Divine; never to any person or any thing; and our hatred should be directed towards everything that prevents us from realising our true nature and towards all obstacles, everything that stands in the way of our progress. And there may be an amount of healthy and manly self-condemnation, but it should never become destructive or end in negative emotionalism: "O what a sinner, what a despicable sinner I am!" If I have done wrong in the past, it is over. Let me know that I have done wrong, but let me not brood over it. Let me turn over a new leaf and do better in future; let me be more wide-awake in future and learn to be a human being instead of an animal. That is the proper way. Whether we are

young or old, we must all be reborn in the world of the spirit and begin our march towards Truth.

In the beginning spiritual practices produce both, good results and bad results. When you go and water the garden nicely, you will get fine fragrant roses, but at the same time all the weeds will grow in great abundance. So you will have to do a lot of cleaning and cutting and uprooting.

Too much worldliness is like fire. It burns the human heart. It makes it callous and unable to appreciate spiritual life or even come to know what real spiritual life means. The faculty of intuition becomes so dulled in the worldly person that he is no longer sensitive to higher vibrations and higher truths, but just goes on wallowing in the mire of his desires and sex-bound and sex-conditioned affections.

### III

All earnest aspirants should observe strict chastity in thought, word and deed. True chastity can never be observed if we are careless in our company or allow old associations to come up in our mind through lack of discretion regarding our talks and the people we meet. It takes a long time to eradicate impure impressions, even when there is a sincere attempt to do so; and it can never be done if they do not avoid each others' company for a very long time. There should be no self-deception as to this.

Christ says, "For there are some eunuchs, which were born so from their mothers' womb: there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for

the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive, let him receive." This was the passage Sri Ramakrishna told the two boys, Sasi and Sarat, (who were later known as Swami Saradananda and Swami Ramakrishnananda) when they first went to see him. He remarked that marriage is the root of all bondage. All the Great Ones have been unanimous as to this fact, but worldly people are always so anxious to do something for God's creation, as if God needed their help! All hypocrisy and cant. God does not need anybody's help; God does not need anybody to help Him in His creation; neither do these people really care. What they want is their enjoyment, not God's creation. People who are able fully to control the sex-impulse for many years and to observe strict continence in thought, word and deed, gain incredible creative strength on a higher plane. They alone really enjoy life, even physically, because they alone are masters over their body and over their moods, and can direct them as they like. A good horseman has great pleasure in riding his horse and in making it follow his wishes. Worldly people do not know the amount of enjoyment a perfectly chaste person gets even out of his body, not to speak of his mind.

To think of one's own ancestors is out-and-out materialism. We alone are our ancestors, not our parents or forefathers. They have given us the instrument, but what we are we owe to ourselves. It is very wrong and very low to conceive life in terms of biological heredity.

Really speaking, the task of spiritual life is to find the radius that leads one to the centre. And here

the same coat cannot fit all, as Swami Vivekananda used to say. At the beginning there must be faith and strict obedience to the instructions given us by our teacher. But faith must never end in faith, but in actual living experience. And then, if you want signs,—signs there are many, if you only open your eyes and think.

#### IV

There should be faith—Shraddha—in the words of the Seers, faith in the words of the teachers and prophets, faith in one's own potential strength and purity. Without a working ideal spiritual life cannot begin. If we put this working ideal too high nothing can be achieved, but, at the same time, we should never lower the ideal as such, but rise to it step by step by taking higher and higher ideals.

Faith, as such, is not enough. You must strive your utmost. Ethical culture means chastity; purity in thought, word and deed; purity in food; purity in one's company and associations; purity in what one listens to. And purity of a chaste life is more important than any other of the spiritual practices. Without these, as a matter of fact, spiritual practice is useless and becomes a mockery.

First comes physical purity. Then the mind must be tackled and controlled. Then comes the control of speech which is most essential. We should never listen to anything that is not perfectly pure and should behave in such a manner that others will not dare to discuss anything impure in our presence. This is the first step. After that a new attitude has to be developed with regard to

all things or objects that tempt us in any way, till perfect indifference with reference to them all is reached. So we should keep strict watch over all the movements of our mind so as to become more and more conscious, more and more wide-awake and definite, in everything. There should not be any unconscious moment in our life.

You see, this is very, very, essential, because in the first period of spiritual life—and the first period may extend over many, many years—body-consciousness becomes stronger, and the mind tends to wander more than it used to do before any practices were taken up. At the same time, affections and aversions become more prominent and more dangerous if we do not scrupulously avoid coming into touch with their objects, either mentally or physically, or both. All who are not careful in this will one day have a nasty fall.

For a time the body becomes in a special way the centre of consciousness in the beginner as soon as he begins to try to draw the mind away. So we should not allow ourselves to be hoodwinked by the subtle desires of our body and our mind that may crop up and try to drag us away to their particular objects which they wish to enjoy. The aspirant can never be too careful in his associations and the company he keeps during the first years of his training for the higher life. Many do not realise this and then come to grief. So we should learn to be conscious, to be aware of our motives, and stop all forms of drifting and all expressions of a merely instinctive life.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYACISANANDA

{The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring Chapters in India's religious literature.]

### SUTRAS 51 TO 55.

In the last five Sutras, Narada described to us the various steps in the ladder of love leading to the footstool of God. We have seen how Narada is very particular in insisting that the last and final step to which all others must lead must be *Prema* or undiluted love. Now the question arises as to how to satisfy oneself that this last step is reached through the various other practices. Narada points out that it is indeed impossible for him to give an adequate idea of love so as to enable one to identify it when it appears, as it is an inner experience which defies precise analysis and description. Nevertheless it would not at all be difficult to recognise it when one reaches that stage, inasmuch as it is self-evident and needs no external proof. One who calls for a previous description of this love so that it may be easily recognised and identified when it actually appears, is just like the child in Sri Ramakrishna's parable, who asks his mother to wake him up when he is hungry. Narada's reply to such a question is the same as the mother's reply to her child that there would arise no such necessity for her to wake him up, as the hunger itself will surely wake him up when the time comes.

अनिर्वचनीयं प्रेमस्वरूपम् ॥ ५१ ॥

प्रेमस्वरूपम् the intrinsic nature of love अनिर्वचनीयम् is incapable

of being described precisely.

51. The intrinsic nature of love in itself defies exact and precise analysis, definition or description.

*Note.*—Every verbal description has its own limitations. It can never be a perfect representation or substitute for the object itself. The description must necessarily be coloured by the defects of the observer, the limitations of language, etc. When such is the fact even in the case of an external object which can be easily analysed and scrutinised, how much more inadequate should be the description of an inner experience like love! The intellectual equipment necessary for such introspection and description is very rare. He who has such equipment has often no experience of love. Even if one is fortunate to have the experience itself as well as the intellectual equipment necessary, the moment the searchlight of the intellect is turned on the experience, the latter vanishes and becomes a thing of the past. Moreover, when the experience itself comes, the mind becomes so wholly absorbed in it that it is not possible for the mind to observe and study the experience critically. A third man, like the psychologist of religion, who pretends to give such a description, being an utter stranger to the experience itself, has to depend upon the

secondary evidence afforded by the not un-often uncritical observations and analysis of the mystics or devotees; or he has to rely merely on the physical effects visible on the devotee, as the Behaviouristic School of Psychology does. In either case the account of devotion, as given by a psychologist of religion like Leuba, is quite unreliable and untrue.

In the next Sutra, Narada gives an analogy to illustrate his point.

मूकास्वादनवत् ॥ ५२ ॥

52. It is like the experience of joy which a dumb man has when he takes something sweet.

*Note*.—Nobody dares deny that the dumb man has his pleasures of the palate, merely because he is not able to describe it on account of the defects in his vocal organs. Similarly nobody should be foolish enough to deny the experience itself of the lover simply because it cannot be precisely described. Like the dumb man's joy which can be only felt by him, love is an inner experience only to be felt and not fit to be described.

In the next Sutra the author points out how even if it is not describable, love makes its presence felt by the devotee when the conditions are favourable.

प्रकाशते क्वापि पात्रे ॥ ५३ ॥

तत् that love क अपि anywhere पात्रे in what is made fit for its manifestation प्रकाशते manifests itself.

53. That love, nevertheless manifests itself in whosoever has made himself fit for such manifestation by constant Sadhana.

*Note*.—The moment the conditions are favourable and the mind becomes sufficiently pure as a result of the exercises prescribed before, the experience of love comes automatically, and makes itself felt by the devotee. This shows the intimate organic relation that exists between the various preliminary spiritual practices and love which forms the last rung in the ladder. Narada, who is both a Jnani and Bhakta, is in a peculiarly favourable position to proclaim to the world the reality of the experience of love, although he professes himself unable to do full justice to it in his attempts at description. He thus boldly challenges the uncritical opinions of western psychologists of Religion like Leuba who often relegates such experience to the same category as hallucination and hysteria, which are forms of mental diseases, often caused by over-wrought nerves or repression. Because these psychologists have not sufficiently purified their minds of the dirt of egoism, they could not have had the first-hand experience, and are therefore unreliable and dangerous guides.

The next Sutra points out why the experience is indescribable, and why such mistakes are made by psychologists.

गुणरहितं कामनारहितं प्रतिक्षणवर्धमानं अविक्षिप्तं सूक्ष्मतरं अनुभवरूपम् ॥ ५४ ॥

गुणरहितम् devoid of all attributes कामना-रहितम् devoid of all characteristic tendencies to selfish action प्रतिक्षण-वर्धमानम् expanding every moment अविक्षिप्तम् homogeneous and integral सूक्ष्मतरम् subtler than the subtlest अनुभवरूपम् of the nature of an inner experience

manifesting itself in the wake of the fulfilment of certain definite condition.

54. *Devoid of all attributes and free from all characteristic tendencies to selfish action, it is of the nature of a homogeneous and integral subjective experience, subtler than the subtlest, manifesting itself automatically in the wake of the fulfilment of certain conditions, and expanding every moment.*

*Notes.—1. Devoid of attributes etc.* Mind and the senses can grasp and language can describe a substance only through its characteristic properties and tendencies to action. Devotion or Prema being devoid of such could not be described. No particular characteristic can be predicated as typical of a Bhakta as all such characteristics can be found associated with various other emotions also.

2. *Homogeneous etc.* The experience of love is one and indivisible. All the powers of the mind are so unified and integrated that it is not possible for the several functions such as the intellect, emotion and will to work separately. Even the subject-object relation, so necessary for observation and description, does not exist in that state. The logical and intellectual powers of the intellect are kept in abeyance at the time of experience. Hence, how to observe and describe?

3. *Subject to experience.* Not capable of being observed by an outsider and so defying description on the mere basis of its physical manifesta-

tions, as advocated by the Behaviouristic school of psychologists. These psychologists have not had sufficient spiritual training, and as the necessary conditions for the manifestation of religious devotion are not fulfilled in them, they cannot have the inner experience itself.

4. *Subtler etc.* It is so very elusive. The moment one tries to cognise it as an object, the experience itself vanishes.

5. *Expanding etc.* Ordinary emotions are dependent on certain causes and are therefore transitory. When the cause of the emotion disappears, the emotion also vanishes. One becomes satiated in a short time by sense enjoyments. But this devotion only becomes more and more enjoyable and gathers a greater strength with each experience. Thus one becomes never satiated, and thus it can be eternally enjoyed. Compare the modern Christian conception of eternally progressive enjoyment in heaven. Also Prof. Alexander's conception of deity itself as that higher life still waiting to be evolved.

तत् प्राय तदेवावलोक्यति, तदेव शृणोति, तदेव भाष्यति, तदेव चिन्तयति ॥ ५५ ॥

तत् That प्राय attaining तत् that एव only अवलोक्यति sees शृणोति hears भाष्यति speaks चिन्तयति thinks.

55. Attaining this love, one sees and hears only that, talks and thinks only that.

*Note.—The whole mind is so absorbed in the experience that thought itself expires in the enjoyment. Every activity of the mind and sense will be redolent with the sweetness of love.*

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Hindu Civilisation:** *By Radha Kumud Mukherji, M.A., Ph.D., Published by Longman's Green & Co., 39, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Price 16 sh. Pages 351.*

Among the modern historians of India Prof. Radha Kumud Mukherji has already distinguished himself by his many works on diverse subjects, such as Indian shipping, Hindu nationalism, local government in ancient India, and biographies of great Indian rulers like Harsha and Asoka. While most of his earlier books deal with some special aspect of Indian history, the present one under review is a general account of the growth of Indian civilisation up to the establishment of the Mauryan Empire. Besides its own excellency, the value of Prof. Mukherji's work is enhanced by the fact that barring the work of R. C. Dutt, which has now become somewhat out of date due to the progress of research, there is no other handbook specially devoted to the subject and suited to the needs of both the scholars and general readers.

In the case of India more than of any country, it is true to say that a historian has necessarily to be more a student of civilisation than of mere political and military events. Earlier to the writings of the Greeks recording the invasion of Alexander (330 B.C.), we have no source-book dealing exclusively with the political development of India. But yet the India of Alexander's time was the product of millenniums of political evolution beginning from 3,250 B.C., which is the date assigned to the earliest Indian civilisation, namely that of the Indus valley. Even to reconstruct the barest skeleton of India's political growth during this immense period of time, besides depending on the results of excavations, one has to have recourse largely to books like the *Vedas*, *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, grammatical works, and Buddhist Canonical writings. All these books are primarily of religious and cultural interest, the references to political and military events being either parenthetical in nature, or introduced as subservient to the religious themes

that formed the primary interest of their writers. Prof. Radha Kumud Mukherji's attempt to treat Hindu history as history of civilisation is, therefore, more in agreement with the spirit of our traditions than other works on Indian history that one usually comes across.

Prof. Mukherji does not, however, neglect the political aspect of Indian history. Indeed he gives us the outline, together with many details reconstructed by him of the growth of Indian political life from the time of the Mahenjo-Daro civilisation. But for him this is only the framework for presenting the real essence of Indian history—the growth of social institutions, the rise of religious theories and sects, the working of republican, monarchical and imperial traditions, the gradual fusion of diverse races and cultures into one common Hindu civilisation extending from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin, the life and teachings of great spiritual leaders like Yajnavalkya, Mahavira and the Buddha, the evolution of art, and all other features of life that make the dry bones of history interesting and worth preserving.

The book is scholarly in as far as it seeks to avoid all wishful thinking and to utilise all available materials on the subject including the latest excavations of Mahenjo-Daro. But it is not too stiff or technical for the general reader. Any cultured person will find it absorbingly interesting. We wish it supplants all the other books dealing with the same period, that are at present recommended as text-books for students of Indian history in our Colleges.

**(1) Ancient Tales of Hindustan; (2) Dramatic Poems:** *By A. Christiana Albers, P.O. Box 247, Calcutta. Pages 129 & 259 respectively.*

In the first of these one gets accounts of the stories of famous epic figures like Ekalavya, Sri Krishna, Dhruba, Vikramaditya, Bhishma, and Chandraghosa. In the second one gets a dramatic presentation of the stories of well-known personages of Indian history or mythology like Nurjahan, Harischandra, Nala, Zeb-un-Nisa, Yamayana, etc.

The books are mostly in blank verse. The author writes with much effect. She has been able to enter into the spirit of Hindu ideals of life and character, and reproduce them vigorously through the medium of English verse. The books make very pleasant reading.

**Shells from the Sea-shore:** *By K. R. Menon, Ph. D., Published by the Greater Indian Publishing House, 80 Wilkie Road, Singapore. Price \$1.00. Pages 68.*

This is a book of poems recording the suggestions that came to the author's mind at various moments and at the sight of various objects of every-day life. As examples of the themes dealt with we may mention the Moon, the Fallen Tree, the Cock, Diplomacy, Baby, Poverty, Peace, etc. Dr. Menon writes with much feeling and his verses suggest a deep understanding of life and Nature life.

**Bhagavad-Gita:** *By a Sadhu, Sanatana Dharma Publishing House, Eranakulam. Second Edition; Price: annas 12.*

This book contains English translation of the text of the Bhagavad-Gita with foot notes, forming the first part of Gita Rahasya by the same author.

(1) **A Catechism of Instruction; (2) A Catechism of Enquiry:** *Being instructions of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Published by Niranjanananda Swamy, Sri Ramanasramam, Thiruvannamalai, Pages 48 & 23; Price 5 as. or 10d., & 4 as. or 8d., respectively.*

**Maha Yoga or The Upanishadic Lore:** *By Who, Published by The New Light Publishing House, Pudukotah. Pages 120. Price Re. 1, or 2 sh.*

Although these books are brought out by two different publishers, they deal with one and the same subject, namely, the teachings of the well-known saint of our times, Sri Ramana Maharshi of Thiruvannamalai. Sri Ramana Maharshi stands for the highest ideals of Advaita Vedanta in their unsullied form. In his teachings he has divested Advaita of all the controversialist tendency, which even this transcendental Gospel has contracted on account of its association with Pundits and logicians during several centuries past. That Advaita is neither a dogma nor an intellectual theory but a simple system of experimental psychology that seeks for the innermost truth in man, and urges and helps him to proceed with this task in the midst of all the pre-occupations of life—is the impression one gains on reading Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings. The chief task to which Advaita sets itself is the removal of the ego, which is the source of all ignorance and suffering. Sri Ramana Maharshi teaches the cause and cure of this disease of ego-sense in a manner that is at once clear, convincing and free from theological predilections. That is why his teachings have been very appealing to many modern men with a critical mind.

Of these books, the first two are the translations from Tamil of the instructions originally imparted by the sage. The Catechism of Instruction takes the form of questions and answers, and may therefore be found very convenient by people who want the teachings presented in a brief and pointed manner. The Maha Yoga is a more systematic and elaborate exposition of the sage's teachings. The learned and critical minded students will find it very helpful in understanding his message.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### President's Sojourn

His Holiness Srimat Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, was on a tour for over a month in the South. Starting from the Headquarters on the 9th of April, he made brief stays in various centres of the Mission at Puri, Bhuvaneswar, Waltair, Madras and Ootacamund. He was received with due honour by the prominent citizens and admirers of the Mission in all these places, and was accorded public receptions at the important stations. Two important functions of permanent interest he went through at Madras: the one was the consecration of the New Shrine room dedicated to the Goddess of Learning at the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home and the other the inauguration of the Centenary Library at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. (We give below details of the second function). All through his tour, besides the impetus given to the various spiritual and philanthropic activities going on under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Movement in various centres, by his presence, the Swamiji was specially instrumental in giving a proper start to the practical spiritual life of several devotees by individual personal instruction and direct aid. After the strenuous tour of over a month on his spiritual mission the Swamiji has left for the Himalayas from Madras, on 15th May by the Grand Trunk Express.

### Opening of the Centenary Library at Madras

The Centenary Library attached to the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore was declared open on the morning of 10th May by Swami Virajananda, head of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. There was a large gathering of the residents of the city and disciples of the Math.

The function commenced with a religious ritual and installation of a portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna in the Library Hall after Puja. Special prayers

and invocation songs were sung by Srimati C. Saraswati Bai.

Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachari, Secretary of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Home, received the guests and led them to the hall where the opening ceremony took place.

On behalf of the Centenary Celebration Committee, Mr. C. R. Srinivasan, made a statement in regard to the library.

### MR. C. R. SRINIVASAN'S STATEMENT

The Committee expected, Mr. Srinivasan said, to collect sufficient amount to be able, after meeting the celebration expenses, to create the nuclei for two permanent funds, one for relief work and another for publication and propaganda. But the collections not being sufficient for both the purposes contemplated, the Committee resolved to get at least one of the objects well started instead of dividing the collections between both with ineffective results. A sum, little over Rs. 5,000, was all that was left in the hands of the Committee available for permanent work. The Committee after deep consideration resolved that propaganda work must receive preferential attention, as with the brisk and steady dissemination of the gospel of service and sacrifice, faith in and goodwill towards the Order would follow in a true spirit of appreciation and sympathy; and prompt co-operation and help in respect of any schemes of humanitarian value undertaken would be a natural sequel.

The essential preliminary for effective propaganda, Mr. Srinivasan continued, should always be a good and well-equipped library at the headquarters, available both to the possible workers and to the public as indirectly forming part of propaganda work itself. The Math in Madras had since its inception been slowly building up a collection of choice books, which now numbered 2,500. These related not only to Hindu religion and philosophy but also to comparative religion and general cultural literature and in particular all the publications of the various centres of the Ramakrishna Mission. Want of space in

the precincts of the Math had till now been one of the contributory causes standing in the way of the development of a public library with the collection as the nucleus.

Acknowledging with gratitude the initial help rendered in this matter by the Centenary Committee, Mr. Srinivasan said that but for the help of the Committee, the scheme itself could not have been thought of. The authorities of the Math wished to give public expression to their abiding sense of thankfulness for the prompt, efficient and sympathetic assistance rendered to them in this matter by Engineering Contractors, Messrs. Gannon Dunkerley & Co., Ltd. They had by their uniform kindness and generous appreciation of the aims and objects of the Mission, not confined themselves to mere business relations but come closer to the Mission as sincere friends. It was to their loving help that the Math owed the erection of their spacious hall for the library within the minimum period of time.

This hall formed, however, only the main portion of the building project connected with the propaganda and publication scheme. The rooms to accommodate the publication section had yet to be constructed and could not now be undertaken for want of funds. An amount equal to that now expended would have to be found to furnish the necessary facilities for such work. The Math authorities earnestly hope that the generous public would give a helping hand and bring to early fruition a noble undertaking begun under excellent auspices.

#### SIR SIVASWAMI AIYAR'S SPEECH

Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar congratulated the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration Committee upon their decisions in regard to the utilisation of the surplus funds in their hands. The Ramakrishna movement had laboured in this Province for a number of years and its activities were well known. He had often wished that there was more of the missionary spirit among public workers in this country. He had often envied the spirit of self-sacrifice which animated Christian Missionaries working in this land. He was therefore glad that Hindu missionaries had also

come into the field and begun to work for noble objects just as other missions laboured with such great success. Of all the missions which so worked, there was none which was more in accord with the spirit of the times than the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. It was not identified with the comparatively older forms of religion not so well suited to the twentieth century and to the present intellectual atmosphere. This was due to the fact that the founder, or at any rate the inspirer, of this Mission, Sri Ramakrishna, was himself a product of the nineteenth century and of the various cultural, spiritual and religious influences which had moulded the thought of India during the nineteenth and earlier centuries.

The Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar continued, laid stress upon humanitarian and propagandistic work. The two principles upon which Swami Vivekananda used to lay stress were sacrifice and service. That sage's own life was an embodiment of those two ideals. The same principles animated the members of the Sri Ramakrishna Order. While congratulating the Committee on their preference for propaganda work, he would mention that this did not mean that the Mission was not engaged or was not going to engage itself in humanitarian work. It was only a question of giving priority to one among a number of desirable objects in the disposal of surplus funds.

Unlike the propaganda carried on in political and other spheres, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar continued, the Ramakrishna Mission desired that its propaganda should be based upon knowledge. It was essential, therefore, that for this purpose there should be a well-equipped library to supply its agents and missionaries with the requisite amount of knowledge, learning and culture. As for the departments of thought to be chosen in connection with equipping the library, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar recommended that emphasis should be laid on religion and philosophy. Comparative religion and comparative philosophy should form the main feature of the library. The other elements of culture were desirable too. But it was a question of making the best use of the limited funds now at the disposal of the Committee. The Mission had identified itself with the Vedantic

system of thought and had little to fear from rationalism. Hinduism itself in its finer forms had little to fear from rationalism. Of course, there were many forms, or rather many levels, of Hinduism. For, Hinduism was not a body of rigid inflexible dogmas and creeds. It had to be viewed rather as a ladder of knowledge and of spiritual uplift. It adjusted itself to varying degrees of intellectual and spiritual capacities. It had great tolerance for all kinds of religions. He had read that according to Swami Vivekananda and other leaders of the Sri Ramakrishna Movement, Hinduism was really a universal religion, not intended to be identified with any particular creed or cult. Whether that statement be absolutely correct or not and whether they could claim that Hinduism had no partiality for its own doctrines or not, one could safely state that there was no religion which was more impartial, more tolerant of differences of views and more prepared to make allowances for varieties in religious belief in minor matters. The one principle upon which Hindu religion laid stress was the fundamental concept which marked the unity of all religions.

For the purpose of spreading knowledge of the Vedantic system and other allied system of Hindu thought, Sir Sivaswami Aiyar continued, a library such as the one opened that day would be most useful. It might not, in his opinion, be wise to spend at the outset on equipping the library with books on branches of knowledge such as economics, history or science. They might first concentrate on study of religion and philosophy, on a comparative plan and he had no doubt that such a study would result in a greater appreciation of the truths of Vedanta. It gave him great pleasure to associate himself with the opening of the library which he hoped would be filled with literature especially calculated to supply the requisite knowledge to the missionaries who would go forth from the Math. It was, however, not enough that missionaries should be filled with knowledge. Mere knowledge without a living faith was no good. Living faith was absolutely essential if a movement was to have any dynamic force. Indeed, it was living faith in the essentials of Hinduism that enabled the missionaries

of the Math to exercise the great influence they did over the minds of people especially the younger ones. He wished the library all success. (Following Sir Sivaswami Aiyar's speech, the President of the Order rose to deliver his address, accepting the gift of the Centenary Library from the citizens of Madras. We have given to the address the leading place in this issue.)

Mr. C. Ramanujachariar read messages wishing the library success received from different persons and also announced a donation to the library by the sons of the late Mr. V. C. Seshachariar of that gentleman's collection of books on religion and philosophy.

#### SPEECH BY SIR KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR

Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar said that as a lay disciple of the Sri Ramakrishna Math, he could say with pleasure that the Mission tried to serve man and help him to a fuller expression of his life. The location of the Math, the library and the dispensary in such close proximity, seemed to symbolise the combination of the spirit of sacrifice, search for truth and service—ideals which the Mission strove for. He had a feeling that religion to-day was on its trial and unless it kept itself in close touch with the pulsating movements of the modern spirit, it would have to abdicate its function. Hinduism was not lacking in this vital element of adjustability. The time had come when heads of religious Orders and Maths should go forward and help in the emancipation of human beings and the solution of the great problems that afflicted mankind. It was fortunate that at the head of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission they had one who combined scholarship, a deep spirit of service and a sympathetic understanding of modern trends. They had, therefore, the hope that ere long they would find libraries, hospitals and educational and other institutions started by the Ramakrishna Mission increase largely, disseminating the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna throughout the land.—*Adapted from the Hindu.*

Celebration of the Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, Vedanta Society, Providence,  
Rhode Island

The Vedanta Society of Providence, Rhode Island, celebrated the birthday of

**Sri Ramakrishna on Feb. 21st.** Swami Vishwananda of Chicago and Swami Akhilananda performed elaborate worship with *homa* and other necessary rituals. Special offerings were made and a few devotees joined in the worship, attending the Vesper service as well. The *prasada* was served to the students who gathered in the evening.

A public dinner was held on Feb. 24th in honour of Sri Ramakrishna. Many professors, ministers, and distinguished citizens of Providence were present. It was a sacred evening, long to be remembered by all who came, for its happiness and charm. The guests expressed their delight and appreciation for the delicious Hindu food which Swami Akhilananda himself had prepared for them. They were enchanted, too, with the exquisite flowers which decorated the Chapel and which showed the devotion and love felt by the devotees for the Great Master, whose portrait was in full view in front of the altar.

Swami Akhilananda introduced each of the distinguished speakers, and it was a pleasure to feel the warm response that came from them as they answered his words of welcome. Not only did they express gratitude for the invitation to share in this joyous celebration, but each one paid special tribute to Sri Ramakrishna and to Swami Akhilananda who has brought the blessing of the Master's love and divine message to Providence.

In the intervals between the speeches, delightful music was provided by Professor Faucher, an eminent violinist, who was ably accompanied on the piano by Miss Faucher. Their brilliant performance was a rare treat, and they gave generously of their talent. A vocal selection was beautifully rendered by Miss. Ruth Webber, accompanied by Mrs. Marian Currie.

The speakers of the evening were Professor Joachim Wach, of Brown University, Rev. Frederick Wilmot of Fitchburg, Mass., Dr. Allen E. Claxton of the Methodist Church, Providence, Swami Vishwananda of Chicago, and Swami Akhilananda. Each of them spoke as if inspired.

Professor Wach, an eminent and well-known scholar of comparative religious showed how Hinduism and Christianity are similar in their experience of the 'Holy', and in their expression of different holy

aspects of the Personal God. Hinduism also depicts the destructive as well as the beneficent aspects. Shiva gives blessings as well as blight and decay. It is through an understanding of this that we can interpret the beauty of the deep philosophical thought which is the rare and significant contribution of India to the spirituality and culture of mankind.

Mr. Wilmot spoke feelingly of a visit which he had made to India, and especially described the Temple of Dakshineswar which he had seen there. Here Sri Ramakrishna had lived, and the wonderful spirit of his divine presence seemed, to Mr. Wilmot, to permeate the atmosphere still. This beautiful spirit is being given to America by the Swamis who come here in His name. They are bringing a much-needed message of harmony and repose that will be a blessed gift to the Western world.

Dr. Claxton emphasized the similarity between the life and teachings of Christ and of Sri Ramakrishna. He said that that Christian land will be benefited by the practices of meditation and concentration which were taught by Sri Ramakrishna, while his synthetic view of religion will help them in establishing understanding and peace amongst different races and groups.

Swami Vishwananda of Chicago, the guest of honour for the evening, made a most interesting and inspiring address on Sri Ramakrishna himself, giving glimpses into his life, and telling of his wonderful power of mind that could solve the problems besetting the world. Secluded in a temple by the Ganges, he gave to the understanding of life and its difficulties a message of harmony and synthesis. As we study that holy and beautiful personality, we must realize that he was in truth a Divine Incarnation.

Swami Akhilananda spoke of the Great Master as one who placed a new emphasis upon religion, who verified that God is actually to be experienced--a man who lived a life of renunciation and intense realization. He came at a time when man was rapidly reaching the zenith of scientific progress, when spiritual life and thoughts were in danger of being crowded out of existence. The Swami quoted that beautiful promise made by Sri Krishna that when-

ever there is a decline of religious faith and the spread of irreligion, He, the Blessed Lord, will come again in human form to save the world from materialism. Not only did Sri Ramakrishna teach that God is to be known and experienced, but also all the religions. He himself verified this, that He is to be found by the paths of all the religions. He himself verified this, proving conclusively that all faiths lead to the same goal,—that all religions are but the various paths that we may choose to follow to reach Him. Swami Akhilananda then invoked the Spirit of the Master to bless each one with His grace, that all might share in the peace and harmony that He came to earth to give.

And so a most inspirational and delightful evening came to a close.

On Sunday, Feb. 26th, both Swami Vishwananda and Swami Akhilananda gave lectures on the life and teachings of the Great Master. Swami Vishwananda emphasized, Sri Ramakrishna's divine message of harmony to a blind, materialistic world, and likened the methods of this great teacher to those of Christ. Both could illuminate by a glance or a touch; both gave their lessons in parable form. All through the ages, the mind of India has been obsessed with the love of the Infinite, the desire for knowing the Unknowable. A long, unbroken line of devout men and women have experienced God, and these great personalities have received but a wonderful spiritual understanding and enlightenment, the bed-rock of Indian religion and culture. The Swami's talk was vivid and inspiring, giving all who were present a feeling of his deep reverence and love for the Great Master in whose name he has crossed seas, and for whom he is devoting his time and energy to bring the divine message to the people of Chicago.

Swami Akhilananda gave in a few words an excellent portrayal of the meaning of Sri Ramakrishna's message to us, and spoke of Swami Vivekananda who was the first to bring the treasure of Hindu spirituality and culture to the West. If we will but follow the teachings of those two great personalities, if we will allow the light to enter and illumine our hearts, then we shall have realized the blessedness and harmony that can be experienced even in this life.

If we will practise the meditation and methods of devotion that these teachers have given us, we shall attain to that peace which 'passeth understanding' and realize the Self which is divine. He emphasized that Sri Ramakrishna's teaching of the divinity of man is the very basis and foundation of all life and spirituality. The moment that men can realize their true nature, the moment they know that they are divine, all differences will disappear. There will no longer be cause for quarrels, and the very problems that are disrupting modern life and thought will be solved completely and for ever.

Music was furnished by Miss Flora Leigh, whose lovely voice gave charm to an already delightful evening. She was accompanied by Mrs. Maria Currie.

Everyone who attended the dinner and the lectures the following Sunday seemed glad of the privilege of sharing in the celebrations, and expressed their gratitude that the Swamis have come from India to bring spiritual enlightenment and unfoldment to America.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul, The Vilangans, Trichur

The report of the Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul and Vidyamandir for the year 1937-38 is a splendid record of what has been achieved in the way of Harijan uplift and national education by the steady work of a band of selfless workers inspired by the ideals of renunciation and service incarnated by the great Swami Vivekananda. Within a decade of its starting it has taken a prominent place among similar institutions.

The Vidyamandir is the school where boys and girls, residential as well as day scholars, receive instruction from the Lower Primary class to the Fourth Form. It will soon be raised to a full-fledged High School. Of the total strength of 382, 234 are boys and 148 girls. The special attention paid to the culture of the mother-tongue, the teaching of Sanskrit and Hindi, the teaching of History, Geography and Civics so as to promote love of national ideals and patriotism, industrial and vocational training, religious classes, music, folklore and dancing and indigenous games—these constitute the special features of the Vidyamandir.

In the Industrial section, weaving, mat-making, drawing, needlework, embroidery, crochet and knitting and printing are taught. The students are sent up for Government examination.

The Harijan Co-operative Store dealing in school requisites is run by the pupils under the guidance of teachers and is a registered society. This is supplemented by theoretical instruction in co-operation and civics.

The residential section has 33 boys and 12 girls, mostly Harijans. The Girls' section, the Matir Mandir, is housed separately and is supervised by a lady superintendent. Other male honorary teachers, who are all residential members supervise the boys' section. The expenses of the inmates are met by the institution. They live a simple open air life following a routine of study and self-help.

Special attention is paid to moral and spiritual instruction according to a well prepared curriculum. The lives of sages and saints, ancient and modern, and the basic principles of all religions with special emphasis on their underlying unity, are taught here. The inmates conduct their daily Puja and Bhajana in the Gurukul temple and recite the Gita, the Upanishads and select Stotras. The annual celebrations of the birthdays of great saints and sages render love and reverence for all religions. Habits of cleanliness and hygiene are particularly inculcated. The inmates receive practical training in self-help by having to do regular domestic work. In the Court of Honour the children dispose of their disputes and complaints through their own elected judges.

The workers of the Gurukul also conduct regular religious classes and Bhajanas in the local jail.

The Prabuddha Bharatam, the organ of the Ramakrishna Mission in Malayalam, edited by a distinguished man of letters, H. H. Appan Thampuran of the Cochin Royal family, and published from the Gurukul, besides disseminating the teachings of the great Masters, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, contains articles by eminent writers on a variety of topics of general interest.

The institution has a bright future. There is no lack of sincere and hardwork-

ing hands. But it is struggling for funds to meet its urgent and expanding needs. It has deserved well of the public help in the past, and we hope the generosity of our countrymen will help it forward to attain still better results in the future. We also commend to all national workers the following note by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya after his visit to Gurukul: "If the drooping faith of workers in the field of national renaissance is to be revived, let them come and see the steady and strenuous achievement that lies to the credit of this institution."

#### Scheme of a Residential College at Belur

*The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandir:* It was a cherished desire of Swami Vivekananda to impart education to our youths on national lines in the manner of the ancient Gurukula system. Through this means alone the pupils can come in close personal touch with the teacher, and without being cut off from the healthly atmosphere of a home-life, can find ample opportunity to develop in a natural way their latent faculties. It is contact with living examples in a suitable environment that can inspire and enoble life.

According to Swamiji, education should bring out strength of character and a spirit of philanthropy, foster in the students an ideal of self-reliance and self-sacrifice and afford them facilities for the assimilation of ideas. Above all, it must develop their will in such a way that they may face the most trying circumstances and carve a way for themselves through adamantine difficulties. Moreover, education, to be a creative force in life, must be based on religion, which in a wider sense seeks fulfilment through the service of humanity—the worship of God in man. At the same time it should not lose touch with the socio-economic conditions; it should rather make every student conscious of the realities of life, provide him with the means of earning a decent livelihood and thus equip him for future citizenship. "We want that education," says the great Swami, "by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. . . . What we want is Western science coupled with Vedanta,

Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddha, faith in one's self."

To materialize this object Swamiji wanted a full-fledged University to grow at Belur, the Head-quarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, where secular education would be imparted along with spiritual and moral culture. Despite its various efforts in the educational field, the Ramakrishna Mission is still far away from realizing this noble vision of Swamiji. Now the authorities of the Mission consider it expedient to make a definite move in this direction, so that a system of education best suited to the needs of the country may be evolved, which may in course of time be as popular as the philanthropic activities of the Mission.

To begin with, it is proposed to start an Intermediate Arts College of the residential type, on spacious grounds close to the Belur Math and the new Temple, where the boys, living in a holy atmosphere away from the tumult and temptations of a congested city-life, will be trained in both secular and spiritual studies. In addition to the advantages of University education, they will be helped to acquire, during this formative period of their life, a steady character and healthy outlook to resist the many evil influences to which our youths are continually exposed. Provision for vocational training will also be made to increase their efficiency, so that they may enter the world better fitted for the struggle for existence. Special attention will be paid to their physical well-being as well.

The College and the hostel will have a limited accommodation and will be manned by a mixed staff of monastic workers of the Ramakrishna Mission and qualified lay professors of a sacrificing turn of mind. It will be a nucleus of the University contemplated by Swami Vivekananda, and in time will be supplemented by other wings of general and technical studies.

It should be noted in this connection that arrangements will be made for the boys to appear in the examination of the Calcutta University.

*An Estimate:* As may be expected, the needs of the proposed College are many and various. An estimate of the cost is given below.

Purchase of land (including the cost of development) ..	Rs. 50,000
College buildings (including equipment) .. ..	30,000
Hostel buildings (including kitchen, dining hall, equipment and sanitary arrangements) .. ..	35,000
Library building (including equipment) .. ..	15,000
Staff quarters (including equipment and sanitary arrangements) .. ..	10,000
Hospital building (with arrangement for 5 beds) ..	5,000
Gymnasium (including equipment) .. ..	5,000
Reserve Fund .. ..	50,000

**TOTAL RS. 2,00,000**

*Immediate Needs:* For the present it is proposed that instead of waiting for the whole amount to accumulate, the College will be started on a piece of Mission land in a temporary structure as soon as a sum of Rs. 50,000, to meet the barest initial expenses of construction and equipment, is available, and will afterwards be shifted to its permanent site when the land is secured and necessary buildings are erected.

This is the humble beginning of a great experiment regarding a most important type of nation-building activity, and it will take its own time to yield any appreciable result. But a great deal of its success will depend on the hearty co-operation of our benevolent countrymen, and specially those who appreciate the urgency of such an educational undertaking.

We earnestly appeal to those who think seriously about the proper education of our youths and have sympathy for such work, to contribute their quota towards making this scheme an accomplished fact.

Contributions ear-marked for the College may kindly be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

**Sri Ramakrishna Mission 36th Annual General Meeting**

*Progress of Work in 1938:* The 30th Annual General Meeting of the Ram-

krishna Mission was held on Good Friday at the premises of the Belur Math, the Head-quarters of the Mission, with Srimat Swami Virajananda, the President, in the chair. A large number of lay and monastic members were present. Swami Madhavananda, the Secretary, presented his report for the year 1938. The following extracts from it clearly indicate the progress of work done by the Mission during the year under review.

**Centres:** There are at present 102 centres of the Math and the Mission in India and abroad. At the end of 1938, the total number of centres of the Mission in India, Burma, Ceylon and Straits Settlement was 54.

**Temporary Relief Works:** The Mission conducted both Temporary Relief Work and Permanent Work as usual. Flood Relief Work in Bengal and Cyclone Relief Work in Orissa were done. In all, over 2,844 mds. of rice, 2,989 new clothes and blankets and 2,328 old clothes were distributed among 7,580 recipients of 2,241 families belonging to 105 villages of 12 unions in Faridpur and Murshidabad Dts., in Bengal, and Puri and Ganjam Dts., in Orissa. In Murshidabad Dt. over 6,300 cases of malaria and other ailments that appeared in the wake of the floods were treated. Rs. 160 were given as aid in cash, besides seed-grains. 279 huts were also put up in Ganjam Dt.

The above relief work is exclusive of the minor relief done by the Head-quarters before July, 1938, and the relief done by the Mission centres at Dacca and Sonargaon, Rangoon and Cawnpore, as well as by the Math centre at Malda.

**Permanent Work:** The Permanent Work was of three kinds as usual, viz., Philanthropic, Educational and Missionary.

**Philanthropic:** The Philanthropic Activities fell into three distinct divisions, viz., Indoor Hospital Work, Outdoor Dispensary Work, and Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds.

There are at present 7 Indoor Hospitals under the Mission, including the Maternity Hospital and Child Welfare Centre popularly known as the Sishumangal Pratishthan at Bhawanipore, Calcutta. In the year under consideration 10,394 patients were treated as against 9,007 in

1937. There were 467 beds in 1938 as against 444 in 1937 in all these hospitals. Rangoon and Benares centres had 170 and 145 beds respectively; Sishumangal Pratishthan and Kankhal 60 and 50; Brindaban, Midnapore and Tamluk 24, 12, and 6 respectively.

34 centres including the Head-quarters conducted Outdoor Dispensaries, each centre having one or more. These dispensaries are flung in different parts of India, and some of them are situated in Benares, Hardwar, Brindaban, Allahabad and other places of pilgrimage, and in cosmopolitan cities and towns such as Rangoon, Bombay, Cawnpore and Lucknow, where they have been alleviating the sufferings of lakhs of poor sick people hailing from different parts of the country and speaking diverse tongues. In all, a total number of 12,86,143 cases was treated in 1938, as against 11,37,794 in 1937 the new and repeated cases being in the ratio of 11 : 20.

The Sevashram at Benares, which is one of the most prominent centres treated 2,21,541 cases and had a daily average of 607. The Rangoon centres treated 2,54,123 cases and held the highest record for outdoor as for indoor work, as usual, the daily average being 696 in the Outdoor Department. The Dispensaries at Bankura, Kankhal, Lucknow, Bhubaneshwar and Salkia each treated between 23,000 and 30,000 new cases. The Tuberculosis Dispensary at New Delhi treated a total number of 15,733 cases.

Miscellaneous, regular and occasional service of various kinds was done by 26 out of the 46 centres in India. In all 106 helpless patients were nursed in their homes, 49 dead bodies were cremated, Rs. 3,654-1-1½ given as aid in cash, 455 mds. 1 sr. 4 chks. of rice and 272 pieces of cloth and blankets distributed, the total number of persons helped regularly or casually in cash or in kind being 2,244.

**Educational:** The Educational Work of the Mission falls into two divisions mainly, (1) Boys' Schools, Girls' Schools and Mixed Schools, the classes ranging from the Matriculation standard to the Primary, as well as Night Schools, Adult Schools and Industrial Schools; (2) Students' Homes and Orphanages. Mass Education

for adults and juveniles through day and night schools formed a feature as usual.

41 centres in India, Ceylon and Straits Settlement conducted one type of educational work or other. In all the centres together there were 28 Students' Homes and Orphanages, 3 Residential High Schools, 7 High Schools, 5 M. E. Schools, 60 Vernacular Schools, 11 Night Schools and 2 Industrial Schools. The total strength of these 116 institutions in India, Ceylon and S.S. was 11,115 in 1938 as against 8,250 in 1937 in 96 institutions, the number of girls being over 26 per cent.

Rural educational work was conducted by such centres as Sarisha near Diamond Harbour, Contai in Midnapore, Habiganj and Sylhet in Assam. The centre at Sarisha had 488 boys and girls in all its institutions.

The Industrial Schools taught one or more of the arts and crafts and industries which may be grouped under the following heads: (1) Mechanical and Automobile Engineering, (2) Spinning, weaving, dyeing, calico-printing, tailoring, (3) Cane-work, (4) Carpentry, cabinet-making, (5) Shoemaking. In the Industrial School and Workshop at Madras, the Mechanical and Automobile Engineering course covers a period of five years and is recognised by the Government. The centre at Habiganj conducts two shoe-factories to provide better training to the cobbler boys of the locality, and runs two Co-operative Credit Societies for the benefit of the cobblers.

In Madras, there were 2,020 students in the Students' Home, Industrial School, Residential High School, and Branch High School at Thyagarayanagar and the Sarada Vidyalaya and its institutions in that place had 869 pupils, the total strength in all the institutions in Madras being 2,889. The Sister Nivedita Girls' High School at Bagh-bazar, Calcutta, had 603 girls. The Mission Residential School at Deoghar, the Students' Home at Gouripore near Calcutta, and the Nivedita Girls' High School at Baghbazar, Calcutta, produced very brilliant results. The Residential High School at Periyannayakanpalayam in Coimbatore, also did valuable work. The Dacca centre had 437 pupils in all its Schools; Jamshedpur Vivekananda Society 338; the

Contai centre 266; the Shillong centre 386; and Taki 286.

*Libraries and Reading Rooms:* Each centre had one or more Libraries and Reading Rooms. The Mission Society at Rangoon did excellent library work and had an attendance of over 29,381 in its reading rooms in 1938. The Students' Home at Madras had more than 20,840 volumes in all its libraries. The total number of books in the Mission centres may be roughly computed to be about 1 lakh and the total number of periodicals 600, in the year under review.

*Missionary:* The monastic members went on preaching tours in India and abroad. A Swami was deputed on invitation to Fiji, and another to Chicago.

More than 300 classes were held and more than 400 meetings convened during the year under review.

There are colonies for the Harijans and for the Backward classes, conducted in Trichur (Cochin), Shella (Khassia Hills) and other places by the monks of the Mission.

*Expenditure:* The total expenditure for the Mission's permanent work in 1938 was about 6 lakhs of Rupees.

*The Ideal of Service:* Swami Vivekananda, the Founder of the Mission, sounded the clarion call for self-dedication and service of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. Such a noble ideal alone is capable of giving peace and light in the world to-day with its clash and conflict, darkness and despair. Will not the youngmen of India respond to the call?

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,  
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

#### Propaganda Tour

Swami Ranganathananda who was deputed for a propaganda tour from the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is now in the Bombay Presidency. His activities started in March with a series of lectures at the Astika Samaj Hall, Matunga, Bombay, which were well attended. In connection with the Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna organised under the joint auspices of the Vivekananda Society and the Hari Hara Bhajana Sangham, he delivered three timely lectures on "Who is

a true devotee?" "The spirit of Indian Culture" and "Life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna," at Poona, which were followed by a series of public discourses on Gita and other allied subjects in the same city, at Sirdars' Bangalow and South Indian Association, respectively.

The Swami's popular exposition of religious, cultural and moral themes was enthusiastically received by enlightened audiences on all occasions he spoke.

#### Activities of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, 1938-39

Since the return of Swami Nikhilananda from his six months' visit to India, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York has had a varied and interesting programme of activities. On December 25th, the Swami opened his Sunday services of this season with the celebration of Christmas, speaking on "The Blessed Life of Jesus." A Christmas tree and greens adorned the Chapel and refreshments were served to the many students and friends who assembled to welcome the Swami to this country.

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in the Chapel, Swami Nikhilananda speaking on "The Inspired Teachings of Swami Vivekananda." During the last week of February and the first week of March, a special programme was arranged for celebrating

the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. On the 26th, Swami Nikhilananda spoke on "The Blessed Life of the Great Master." A small statue of Sri Ramakrishna in meditation, placed on a special altar, was decorated with garlands and flowers, as were the other holy pictures in the Chapel. The following Friday, Swami Vishwananda of Chicago conducted the service and spoke on "The Laws of Inner Life." Two days later, Swami Vishwananda again addressed the congregation, speaking on "How to be a Yogi." On Sunday evening the annual Sri Ramakrishna birthday dinner was given, with over a hundred guests present. Swami Vishwananda and Dr. Taraknath Das of New York University were the guest speakers. After the dinner, Swami Nikhilananda showed moving pictures of the holy and historical places he had visited in India recently and described them in great detail. Everyone was keenly interested in this medium of contact with India.

Swami Nikhilananda has also addressed members of "All Souls' Church" in New York and the Central Congregational Church of Brooklyn, as well as a class at the Dalton School.

In addition, the Swami has opened regular Tuesday evening classes on the Upanishads and Friday classes on meditation and the study of Raja Yoga at the Center. These classes are being very well attended.

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## HOSPITALITY

[These stanzas from the National Epic embody the proverbial virtue of our race. The sentiment expressed in them is highly ethical and profoundly spiritual as the last verse discloses. The oft-quoted assurance of protection conveyed by the last couplet not only gives the greatest solace to erring humanity but also demands of them, as illustrated by Sri Ramachandra himself, utmost forgiveness and self-giving hospitality.]

श्रूते हि कपोतेन शत्रुः शरणगतः । अचितश्च यथान्यायं स्वैश्च मासैर्निमन्त्रितः ॥  
 शृणु गाथा पुरा गीतां धर्मिष्ठां सत्यवादिना । बद्राजलिपुटं दीनं याचन्तं शरणगतम् ॥  
 न हन्यादानशंस्यार्थमपि शत्रुं परन्तप । आर्तो वा यदि वा दत्तः परेषां शरणगतः ॥  
 अपि प्राणान् परित्यज्य रक्षितव्यः कृतात्मना । तं चेद भयाद् वा भोहाद् वा कामाद् वापि न रक्षति ॥  
 स्वया शक्त्या यथान्यायं तत् पापं लोकगर्हितम् । विनष्टः पश्यतो यस्यारक्षितुः शरणगतः ॥  
 आदाय सुकृतं तस्य सर्वे गणेशः क्षितः । एवं दोषो महानतः प्रपन्नानामरक्षणे ॥  
 अस्त्वर्ये चायशस्यं च बलवीर्यविनाशनम् । धर्मिष्ठं च यशस्यं च स्वर्ये स्यात्तु रुलोदयम् ॥  
 सकृदेव प्रगन्नाय तवास्माति च याचते । अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददास्येतद् व्रतं मम ॥

We hear of the hospitality done in a fitting manner and with due reverence by a pigeon—a mere bird—to one that came to its abode—that too a foe, none other than the hunter who shot down its mate—and of the repast which that pigeon offered to him out of its own flesh. In this connection listen to the couplets, pregnant with the spirit of righteousness, recited by Mrikandu, the truthful, in days gone by: O valorous one, in the name of mercy, let not the miserable person who has respectfully approached one with folded hands, seeking refuge, receive any harm even though he be a foe and an arrogant one for that matter. It is incumbent upon a sensible and virtuous man to save him, even though it may demand the cost of his own life. And if that refugee is not given proper security, to the best of his powers, either due to terror of his overpowering opponent, or due to some mercenary motive, or being prevented by other pre-occupations, the sin of that omission as well as the censure of all the world, will be upon him. Under his very eyes the forlorn refugee will depart carrying along with him the merits of his good deeds. Thus what a colossal evil would arise by the desertion of one that has trustingly sought the protection of another! Such behaviour can never be conducive to the highest happiness; one's good name is tarnished thereby; and such conduct would annihilate one's power to promote good and put down evil, acquired through religious practices. But if one observes this noble rule, that would bring on the fruits of spiritual merit, a good name and supreme happiness. I am perpetually vowed to this principle: I grant security from all fear to every being, the moment he comes to me and prays 'May I ever remain yours.'

From Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Book VI Ch. 18.

## CHARACTER IN MODERN LIFE

### I

BEFORE the dawn of the Industrial Era learning was chiefly sought by people to equip themselves with the virtues of a gentleman or Sishta. Education was the cherished privilege of the leisured few, and the toiling masses were not in the daylight of knowledge. A pre-eminently literary or theological bias stood in the way of its being reduced to a formal institution, as it is today, integrated with the political and economical projects of the State. The strong, cheerful Greeks, who were the first to make history in Europe, turned their energies in the channel of self-culture from the view-point of aesthetics. They persistently strove to attain the pink of good taste and elegance, wit and heroism, observation and argument; they were not however noted for any remarkable ethical perception. Plato's reduction of *to agathon*, the principle of goodness, to *to kalon*, the law of beauty, clouded and confused the ethical issues to some extent. The refined suppleness of the Greek mind was far removed from the gifts of their conquerors, the Romans. Self-sacrifice is the virtue ascribed to them; but that was largely inspired by greed of enjoying the good things of this world. Modern Europe, mentally and spiritually resurrected at the touch of these two extinct civilizations, proudly holds their legacy; and rightly, all that is grand and animating in the Occident today may be traced to it. The Asiatic influence of a spiritual Christianity, added later on, never supplanted the Greco-roman influence; but on the other

hand in its turn it was largely transformed under Hellenic and Latin influences. European society and polity at the present day seek the fulfilment of the Greek and Roman ideal of citizenship as the very fundamental concept of human welfare.

If in the West the value of the individual was determined by the function he performs in society, in the East, especially in India, the foremost individual, as the Gita states, is the standard for the society to follow. These two starting points give two different outlooks upon life regarding the development of character and personality, in these two different parts of the world. It is worth while to study these two ideals at the present juncture in the interests of both, with a view to arriving at the common ground of both, where the drawbacks of either can be eliminated and a beneficial standard can be discovered.

### II

Since in the West self-culture is subordinated to the demands of the State or society, according to Western thinkers, socialization is the essence of character. The function of the State is to help by compulsion or persuasion better social integration and unification. This is rendered somewhat easy by the compactness and complexity introduced into society by the advancing sciences in recent times. The educational outlook and character training have been profoundly affected by these conditions. The whole process has fallen into a chain: science advanced industry, industry promoted trade, trade

made cities, cities invited crowds and crowds unmade men. With due regard to all the brilliant achievements of the present scientific age and the educational ideals presented to us by it, it must be said that an education made subservient to political and economic institutions, although it may be the best to supply the State and society with industrious, alert, efficient, dependable, intelligent specialists to run the machine, renders culture superficial, character fragmentary and knowledge itself dangerous. The social chaos in the so-called peaceful States and the submerged martial excitement in the war-minded States are clear indications of this defect.

The present age in the midst of unprecedented knowledge and power is certainly poor in purpose and uncertain in its values. In spite of grand theories and staggering statistics, economics is the science of wealth rather than the science of welfare. We saw that democracies could not cure war, but war has cured democracies, drastically, by substituting psychotic Dictatorship or institutionalised barbarism. Equality of opportunity is deemed to be the core of democracy; but to the mentally unequipped opportunities are elusive. "Democracy without education," rightly points out a recent writer, "is hypocrisy, without limitation." When intellectual and financial power is unevenly distributed and greed for enjoying the good things of the world is dominating every head, equality in the ballot can hardly prove the 'greatest happiness of the largest number' to be anything more than pious cant. The highest function of the State is to give character by right education and not by profuse legislation. But

education cannot breed noble character without the requisite moral atmosphere created by sound ideals. President Coolidge's words are worthy of being engrained in the memory of the present generation: It is not what men know but what they are disposed to do with what they know that will determine the rise and fall of a civilization.

The way in which an individual or Nation is disposed to make use of its resources is determined by the purpose which governs the individual or group concerned. Although the immediate cause of war may be rivalry or fanaticism, or ammunition makers' and shipowners' profiteering interests or crooked politics, in its last resort it is due to the lack of character in individuals. In every individual there is a master-purpose, dimly or clearly perceived, which determines the quality of his relation to others and to the world at large. A master-purpose which is valued as good endows one with an effective personality; for without character and unity of purpose none can possess a personality. But character and personality do not result from mere controlled response to social environments. The specific habits built up by social interaction cannot explain the whole of character, the roots of which lie far deeper. No doubt, the sociological development of men from animality to rationality lies through inter-subjective interaction and the group consciousness unfolded thereby; but had there not been a deeper spiritual unity and urge behind, such a superficial sense of unity would have remained a delusion. The coincidence of public and private ends brought about by the standardization of everything from motor cars to feelings and

ideas is a very misleading index to the unity of humanity, which can only be on the spiritual plane. Experimental methods and analytical study have given the modern mind a sense of unity in the realms of existence; some thinking men are also ready to accept and define morality as the function of the part against the whole and the future against the present. However in actuality the *whole* is the political unit of a State or a massed bit of humanity shouting over an imaginary racial label. As to the future, who can have a sincere belief beyond the personal financial security, without a genuine faith in a previous state of one's own existence? Political authoritarianism floats on the grandiose delusion of a present without much bothering about the whole or any extended future. Character is a cankered flower where originality and creativity in every realm of spiritual activity is blasted by persistent regimentation. However much States may try to teach people habits and ideals calculated to create the greatest enjoyment for the largest number of their citizens, the whole edifice must smash in the whirl of time because individuals are mere stones in such imposing constructions that have their basement on quicksand.

### III

Therefore a fundamental living faith in an abiding Truth, and not an artificial socialization, alone can supply the vertebra for character today. This the modern world sadly lacks in. The integration of a "we-feeling" through fictitious race theories and joint-stock interests called up by the economic and political propaganda adroitly engineered by military

States is a very insubstantial substitute for the spiritual solidarity of mankind which religion has been trying to insist on for the last two or three millenniums. This is the forte of India. In spite of her chequered political history and dreamy lethargy, India still bears in her warm bosom this spark of wisdom the world so badly needs today. It is India, her glorious spiritual wealth, and not a weak, chaotic, undisciplined, deluded populace lickerish after the sensuous luxuries that are inundating Indian cities from a superfluous West, that can supply this light. Genuine India held and still holds that character is an active expression of an inner realization of the perfection and Divinity inherent in man, and that it manifests progressively in man's upward course of unfoldment. India may be poor in economically productive ability. Yet she has stood through centuries to her guns to conserve spiritual values, as she believed that that alone could save the individual and society ultimately. No genuine Indian can lightly endorse Renan who said that 'religion is an indispensable delusion,' or refrain from pitying a Voltair whose faith led him to declare that 'we would have to invent a God if there were none.' Honest atheism is far less repugnant than pious hypocrisy—this is writ large on the pages of the history of philosophy and religion in India. Spirituality is the essence of India as gravity is the essence of water; and therefore to her character education means progressive realisation of the spiritual and ethical values in the individual. A true Indian who is taught to love all living things as his own self—not as a figure of speech, but as a 'matter

of inborn conviction—cannot but be gravely struck by the Bismackian dictum: There is no morality between Nations. Yet the ideal which the Vedic civilization infused into the arteries of India was not a fanciful construction devoid of a code of instruction and method of training. The Revealed Scriptures, Traditional Codes and social customs in *their real spirit* endeavour to build up an intellectual aristocracy through their pervasive and persuasive influence. The conception of Dharma inculcated by these is the national guardian of Indian character.

#### IV

What are the characteristic features of the Indian ideal that may be serviceable for humanity today, and especially for India herself, in founding character and personality and thus assuring general welfare? Before everything else, according to the principles of Indian culture, the first thing desired is an intelligent respect for the conventions of society and the acquisition of such knowledge as would help in utilising properly the contributions made by the ancestors. The essential part of a truly Indian method of character education consists in appraising the historical and spiritual traditions in a sympathetic and serious spirit and in assimilating them with due toleration for the new knowledge which fresh contact or inventions may bring in the course of time. "To break sharply with the past is to court discontinuity that brings madness, the social amnesia that comes from the shake of sudden blows or mutilations. The sanity of the individual lies in the continuity of his memory. The sanity of the group

consists in the continuity of its traditions; in either case the break in the chain involves a neurotic reaction and a disturbance dangerous to life." India's proverbial reverence for her past, bordering on a passion, is the result of the recognition of this fact. If, as Clifford Barret has pointed out, "true history is that which discloses the ideas, the purposes, and ideals which have constituted men's view of life and their motives of action," the great Epics of India are better histories than the chronicles of courts and camps, and they afford even now a happy hunting ground for character.

Another significant factor in Indian life, which is a potent cause in rearing noble character, is the great reverence for home and motherhood. The disruption of the collective family, and the family unit itself, in mechanised States due to the delegation of the sacred duties of the family to other agencies and the craving for the enjoyment of that magnificent independence in the common slavery of an overshadowing State that inspires the modern piety of national patriotism, throwing to the winds all filial respect and parental loyalty, offers a painful lesson to India; for India has always held that nobility of character is a precious heritage handed on through successive generations in family by subtle personal contact between several members of different ages and vocations who deserved and received due degrees of deference and love from every other member. Achara or good manners and Dharma or national righteousness are born and propagated in and through the family, whose inviolate sanctity is dearer than all other valued possessions to a true

Indian. What a subtle nourishment the growing child receives from the protective care with which the whole clan surrounds it! The boy who was to complete his education in closest proximity with nature at the residence of a venerable teacher—which is but a historical memory today—in hourly contact with knowledge-thirsty youths who are drawn from every part of the land in common labour and aspiration, was unconsciously growing in wisdom from day to day. And the teacher used to be a centre of knowledge and holiness radiating peace and wisdom with every pulsation. If these forgotten ideals are revived with due adjustment to modern needs, India need not despair of character and can be a lamp to others.

The Hindu ideal of character education may appear austere to the modern mind, because at no period of education pleasure is made an end in itself; sincerity is the core of Indian art and even aesthetic pleasure was a sort of sugar-coating to consume wholesome ethical ideals and standards which sense-bound man would turn away from at the outset. Many avoid the mandates of Scriptures; prescriptions of moral codes may again be speciously evaded by others; but they are all caught in the influence of art that persuades like a lover its votary to tread the right path. According to Indian ideals there is no education apart from character training—Vinaya. No education, says the author of *Naishadhiyacharita*, is complete unless it passes through the four successive stages of receiving lessons from a teacher, intelligent assimilation of them, putting into practice the wisdom assimilated and imparting it to others. The

foundation for character is laid in the ideal of *Brahmacharya*, the special word employed to denote studentship. The term 'brahma' connotes, according to the lexicon, the accumulated holy wisdom of the race, the Divine essence lodged in man and the universe, as the seat of all perfection, and also the concentration that elicits them through proper discipline. The highest value is conserved in God-head, and man, an emanation from Him, lowers his status by behaving in a manner unbecoming of his high state; the energy behind his will is Divine; his blemishes are the result of ignorance. Hence in the sense of shame lies the root that nourishes a beautiful character. Reverence for the higher self is the motive for ethical action. His conscience is not to follow the policeman and justify the doggerel:

I cannot steal. I cannot lie.  
Indeed my sins amount to nought.  
Though candidly the reason why  
Is, I am afraid of being caught.

Man, *Nara*, is made a hell, *Naraka* (*ka* means despicable), by wilful blindness. The motive for character training is within and not without. All virtues in the last resort are 'self-regarding.'

## V

We have thus seen that character, although it is an effect born of several subtle influences and specific habits resulting from them, receives direction and integration only by an abiding faith in the nobility and potentiality lying in one's own self. India teaches that the basis of all self-development is in the firm faith that man attains his full personality only when he participates in divine life. Self-realization is the goal that

draws out the finest traits that lie dormant in man. To develop character even as an art of living, in which one's conduct is embellished with virtues like honesty, reliability, fairness, gentleness, sweetness, kindness, frankness, forgiveness, truthfulness, generosity, magnanimity, charity, liberality, amiability, geniality, humility, modesty, sobriety, sympathy, co-operation, patience and the like one will find in the modern world acceptance of the above truth helpful and easy. The economic and scientific gains of the modern age are worse than useless if the value of character is not recognized supreme. We may have certified experts in all branches of knowledge from aviation to accountancy; one may rise to the pinnacle of eminence in the State or society by self-salesmanship and orations; but still in the corners of one's heart may lurk brutality of behaviour and chaotic revel of base desires. To sub-

due the barbarism of excited will is the first step in self-culture. Without a worthy objective and motivating interest worthy of the children of the Divine, none can get over the distracting trivialities of life. Reverence and admiration for an exalted aim can alone supply the drive for higher character. In the exordiums of Hindu Smritis one meets with instruction in the arts of mental and physical cleanliness, Saucha. Life was a prolonged campaign, according to the sages, against ignorance and stupidity. This was achieved by enjoining on all, especially the students, to recognise and nip in the bud all inappropriate stirrings of the mind by vigilance and zeal and by keeping constantly before their eyes lives of great ones, the virtues illumined by their lives being made the object of one's imitative absorption. They supplied the standard for one's progress by constantly applying them to oneself, reverently yet critically.

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BY A DISCIPLE

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life-time he had travelled extensively all over India, and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of his disciples, and contain many of the instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.—The Editors.]

It was then some days Mahapurushji had come from Madras to the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay, at the persistent desire of the local devotees. Everybody was delighted at his arrival; and daily holy talks and chanting of God's names and devotional music were going on in the Ashrama. Every one was brimming with joy. Mahapurushji had been to Bombay once before, in 1924. At

that time the Ashrama was housed in a rented building. He had then laid the foundation-stone for the new Ashrama building, invoking the name of the Master. Within three years the Shrine room and other parts of the Ashrama building were constructed. This time Mahapurushji stayed in that Ashrama building.

It was the month of February, and the days were still cold. A little after

sun rise Mahapurushji used to go out for a walk on the beach, towards Juhu and other places. On some days he used to go to the Shiva temple for worship, which was consecrated by the fishermen of the locality. The fishermen were all delighted at the sight of the aged Swamiji. What a devotion they had!

One day morning Mahapurushji was seated in his own room. At that time a Sannyasin of the monastery drew near him with due obeisance and sat by the side. In the course of the conversation which took place between them, Mahapurushji told him, in connection with the remarks that came up regarding some institutions, "My child, it is quite natural that such things happen. Seeing and learning from those examples, men will be able to understand what is genuine. Those who sincerely search after Truth hold fast to it. Truth alone succeeds, never falsehood. Certainly truth alone will be victorious. Lie and hypocrisy will be swept away before the power of truth. Know this for certain that those who long for the attainment of Truth, heart and soul, will certainly be led by the Lord through the right path. There is no fear for them whatsoever." Then, regarding the Master, a certain Sannyasin enquired, "Well Maharaj, when you all met the Master, what was the impression you carried with you?"

Mahapurushji: When we used to visit the Master the thoughts never occurred to us whether he would be an avatar or not. We could not conceive that he would do something so wonderful and extraordinary in this world. Who could comprehend that this plain and simple man so ordinary to all appearance, could stir

the whole world? He loved us. We were drawn to him by that love. How could I express the Master's love? It was simply indescribable. In boyhood we had experienced the love of our parents, and it was completely beyond our comprehension that there can be a love superior to that. But on arriving at the feet of the Master and receiving his love, it was plain to us that the love of our parents was trivial, extremely insignificant. Coming to him, it seemed as if we have come to our own place—as if till now we were exiles wandering in alien places. This is exactly what suggested to me when I came to the Master. How others thought, I do not know. The Master also received me as his own from the first time of our meeting. One day he told me, "Look here, many people come here; but I never enquired of anybody where his house was or what his father was. I was not curious to know those things. Seeing you for the very first time the desire is engendered in my mind to know where your house is and what the name of your father is. Can you tell why it is so? Please tell me where your house is. What is your father's name?" I informed him that my house was at Borasa and that my father's name was Ramakanai Ghosal. On hearing it the Master exclaimed, "Is it so? Are you the son of Ramakanai Ghosal? Oh, that is why the Mother has awakened in me the desire to know your whereabouts. I know your father very well. He was the attorney of Rani Rasmani's family. These people here respected him very much and took special care of him. Whenever he used to come here they used to see to his food and stay, and arranged servants also for him. He

practised religion intensely. Whenever he used to come here he used to go to the Mother's temple dressed in silk cloth. He would then appear as a veritable Bhairava—a man of full stature and orange complexion. His chest was always blood-shot. Seated in the Mother's temple, he used to meditate long. A musician used to accompany him. Seated behind him that musician used to sing various songs about the Mother and the philosophy of embodied condition. And your father would plunge himself in contemplation, tears trickling down from his eyes. After the period of meditation when he used to come out of the temple, his whole face appeared crimson; people dreaded to come before him.

"In those days I was experiencing an unbearable burning sensation all over my body. One day when I came across him I told him, 'Hallo, you call upon the Mother, and I too do the same. In addition we do a little meditation also. But how is this that I suffer this scorching sensation so much all over my body? Can you find the reason for it? Don't you see (pointing to his body) my hairs are burnt owing to that sensation?' At times it became intolerable and then your father advised me to wear a talisman which he gave. To my great astonishment, as soon as I wore it the burning sensation totally disappeared. Would you request him to meet me once?"<sup>1</sup> In those days I stopped at Calcutta and now and then used to go home. On intimating to my father the Master's wish, he was very much pleased and once paid a visit to him. One day the Master told me, 'Your father's spiritual practices were prompted by desires. It was by the power of those

practices that he was able to acquire so much wealth and spend them on good causes'."

Continuing the trend of the talk about his early days Mahapurushji said, "At that time I was of very tender age. I could hardly recall anything special regarding those days. However, I could very well remember this, namely, that my father fed a number of people. My mother would do all cooking with her own hands and would feed all. She was fond of feeding other people. At that time my father could appoint two or three Brahmin cooks without any difficulty whatsoever; yet my mother would not allow it. Almost every work she did by herself. My mother was a very noble woman; and she always loved a plain life. Seeing her drudgery my father would always feel sad over it. Noticing it my mother would say, 'To feed all these people is certainly a great good fortune for me. They are all my own children.' When I was nine years old my mother passed away. She used to wear a broad bordered sari.

<sup>1</sup> When Ramkanai Ghoshal visited the Master on another occasion the Master was very glad, and in a state of trance placed his feet on his shoulders. At that time also Mr. Ghoshal prayed for his pecuniary welfare as before. The response came from the Master, "It will be so, if the Mother wishes." Mr. Ghoshal spent his earnings laudably by serving holy men, by helping freely people who were in sad plight and, above all, by arranging for the education and maintenance of a group of poor boys. At times he used to give shelter and food for 20 or 25 school boys. He being appointed as a deputy Collector, later on, his income diminished. He therefore was not able to do charity as freely as before or devote more time for contemplation. He was very much pained for this. Latterly he became one of the ministers of Cooch Behar State.

I do not remember anything particular except these. My uncle used to say: She never desired anything for herself, not even her own clothes.

"As time went on my visits to the Master, which were becoming more and more frequent, brought into my mind a determination to give up all connection with worldly life, and I went to my father to take final leave of him. When I divulged my intention to my father, he began to weep bitterly. There was a special room in our house set apart, where God was worshipped, and my father directing me there asked to prostrate to the Deity. Afterwards, placing his hand on my head, he blessed me saying, 'May you realise the Divine, I have striven so much for it; I also tried to renounce home, but I failed. That is why I bestow upon you my blessings so that you may at least realise God.' I told this incident to the Master on my returning to Him. He was extremely glad to hear it, and exclaimed, 'very well done'."

Sannyasin: Now-a-days such parents are very rare. It won't be an exaggeration even if we say such do not exist.

Mahapurushji: Yes, that is true. We should remember the fact that my father was doing religious practices. That is why he behaved so. Moreover, in spite of his endeavours he was not able to realise God. He had also the longing to attain God, the essential Truth that ever is. Enough of the experiences of the worldly life also he possessed. That is why he was capable of granting my wish so easily.

Mahapurushji sat for his night meals. The talk coming up regarding the Master's diet, one Sannyasi enquired, "Maharaj, is it a fact that

the Master's palms were so delicate that it would get cut while breaking a piece of *luchi*?

Mahapurushji: Yes. The palms of his hands were extremely soft. Why, the whole body was very delicate. You might have noticed a variety of hard *luchi*. One day while breaking such a piece of *luchi*, his palm was cut.

On questioning as to the quantity of food the Master used to take at night, Mahapurushji said (pointing to the *Prasad luchi* in his own plate), "Such a piece or at the most two small pieces of *luchis* made up his night meal. Along with that, he would take a little milk boiled with semolina. He could not digest pure milk. So he used to take a preparation like *payas* which was made by boiling a quantity of semolina in milk mixed with water. He used to take a small quantity of that kind of *payas*; but if he would get hungry in the interval between meals, he would generally eat a bit of something. He used to keep *sandesh* in his room. When he was hungry he would take a piece and eat. Sometimes if anybody was in his presence, after eating a part of it, he would share the rest with him. In every respect the Master was exactly like a boy."

After meals Mahapurushji was smoking from his Hooka in his room. Then a certain Sannyasin questioned him: "Maharaj, while the Master was ill, yourself, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda had been to Buddha Gaya without the knowledge of the Master. While returning from there did he speak anything?"

Mahapurushji: Certainly, would he not notice it? Motioning his fingers and shaking his thumb, he said,

"There is nothing anywhere." And afterwards, pointing to his own body, said, "Now every thing is here. You may go anywhere else. You will not get anything. Here all doors are open."

## HARMONY OF FAITHS THROUGH WESTERN EYES

BY MONSIEUR MARIO MEUNIER

[The following interesting and thoughtful discourse was given by Mon. Meunier, a distinguished literator of Paris, on the occasion of the 104th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna celebrated there. Translation: by Mr. P. Seshadry Iyer, B.A., M.L.—The Editors.]

A FAMOUS Pythagorean, Aristoclene de Tarente, narrates the following anecdote:

Socrates, while walking one day in the tangled streets of Athens, met an Indian traveller.

"Which philosophy do you follow?" asked the stranger. "All my researches," replied Socrates, "bear on human life and the quest of human wisdom."

"Is not a person liable to err?" answered this missionary of Buddha, "if he philosophises on human wisdom and life, ignoring divine wisdom?"

We commemorate today the 104th Anniversary of the birth of one, the most inspired by this divine wisdom in recent times,—Ramakrishna. He was born in the East, in that sacred India, which was regarded in ancient times as the habitation of the most religious people in the world. Clement of Alexandria writes: "From the Orient has indeed come the light which illuminated the darkness for the first time. From the Orient has risen the flame of Truth on the head of those who were immersed in ignorance, like the sun (on the sensible world). That is why we turn towards the east when we pray. That is also the reason why the temples of remote antiquity faced the west so that those who offered

sacrifices standing with their faces turned towards the images of the Gods could fix their eyes on the Orient."

Our enthusiasm and attention are fixed not merely on the star which stopped on the manger of the Saviour of the Occident; our march to the light is to those very places where the star which conducted the Magis rose. It was risen in the Orient, in the very Orient where the holy and pious voice of the great Ramakrishna was heard recently, for the spiritual salvation of the people of the world. In proclaiming salvation by fervour and faith, by love and union with God, his mission was to re-awaken in all souls the gleam of the Divine sun who gives form and life, (intelligence and measure) harmony and proportion, nobility and goodness, to all those who shine by Its eternal splendour. This sun links us to itself in giving us its light and flame, this supreme and transcendent Principle, this one inexpressible by any name. All beings are attracted to It. Clement of Alexandria says: "Everywhere, at all times, and in all places, there is no nomad tribe, nation or city, that could live and maintain itself without an instinctive faith in a Superior Being. Travel east or west, north or south, everywhere you will

find the one and the same institution of the Supreme monarch, because the universal results of that creative power equally embrace all places and times."

While preserving Its indescribable unity, this Supreme Principle, the Primordial one, does not cease from sing- ing the multiple and manifesting its grandeur and glory. So the sages tell us; meanwhile, human beings, frequently by routine, and always by excess of pride and egoism, end very often by becoming insensible to this revelation. Nature has incessantly varied the theme of its plays and glories; but their eyes are without lustre and their hearts without love. The soul that is materially ripe can no more see or hear. In intercepting the celestial rays, it has lost the sense of contemplation, and knows not to link the invisible to the visible. For lifting us out of the mire of ignorance and despair, great and inspired men come from time to time, to light the shining serene flame which unites in the same brightness, the sun of the world and the sun hidden in all hearts and souls.

Such was the mission of Ramakrishna. His soul was so profoundly and so ardently religious that he hoped, as Proclus, to be the hierophant of all the mystics and the initiate of all the religions. I believe that he would have willingly sub- scribed to the following words of Plutarch. "God is. He is not like the things measured by time, but ac- cording to an unchangeable eternity. There is no before or after for Him. He is the eternal present. He fills always." At the same time does not Plutarch voice forth the following incessant thought of Ramakrishna?

"There are not," says this great priest of the Delphian Apollo, "different Gods for different peoples. The Greeks have not their Gods and the Barbarians theirs. There are no separate Gods for the inhabitants of the north, or the south. Just as the sun, the earth and the ocean are the same for all the mortals, though they may be called by different names, so the one spirit which (governs) this universe receives different names and epithets from different peoples." Since, then, the Gods of the nations are only the phases of one and the same God, religions are like a divine prairie, where diverse flowers of different shades grow. All these flowers proceed from the same sun, shine in life with the beauty of the same luminary and rise up to unite in death with the flames of the same planet which caused their growth. So also, for the illumined soul, religions come near and meet though they may seem opposed, because all have the same goal. Their fundamental unity allows each follower to become ripe for liberation in the fixed bosom of his own particular faith. To change one's religion is to stray into an un- known desert; to surpass one's destiny is to expose oneself to the risk of losing the genius of one's race and its traditions. The wise man does not change his faith, he is content in under- standing all and raising himself, to a comprehension of their diversity and a contemplation of their secret and perennial unity. If the world were wise, we would feel ourselves to be the children of the same father; we would, despite the diversities which are necessary to the harmony of the world, unite and bind ourselves by the bonds of divine relationship and would live confident, tranquil and

peaceful. Religious peace, the healthiest of all kinds of peace, would be assured, because we would know that force and violence can never prevail against liberty and that the thoughts and feelings of men grow in spite of all the tyrannies. The great pagan, Themistus, writing to the Emperor Constantine, formulated the principle in the following manner. "You have made a law full of wisdom by giving every one the right of embracing the faith he chooses and thus assured to all the calm and peace of the soul. But that law does not date from you; it is contemporary with humanity. It is the eternal decree of God. It lays down the idea of the Divinity in all

souls, even in those of the barbarian and the savage; and this idea is so sovereign in us that force cannot prevail against it. As to the manner of expressing it, it is left to the will of each. To invoke force against conscience is to enter into a war with God, because it is trying to violently deprive men of the right they hold from God Himself."

May Ramakrishna give to the modern world, which expiates by all sorts of evil, its forgetfulness of the Divine, the peace, the goodness, the sweetness, the intelligence and the love which are the characteristics of the free children of God.

## INCARNATION

BY ADHAR CHANDRA DAS, M.A., P.R.S.

[Mr. Adhar Chandra Das is Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University. In the ensuing essay he studies the conception of Avatara philosophically and points out *inter alia* that there is nothing to boggle about in admitting such a profoundly rational principle of theology into speculative philosophy.—The Editors.]

THE question of Incarnation is relevant only from the point of view of a philosophy according to which the universe in which we find ourselves is rooted in a supreme Being Who is not only conscious of Himself, but also cares for His creation; for the word 'Incarnation,' taken broadly, signifies divine descent. It is possible, however, to fix on a still wider import of the term. It has come to be a usage of language to emphasise attribution of a quality to an individual by representing him as an incarnation of the quality, and this indicates that an incarnation is a concrete embodiment of something abstract. Though this is nothing more than a figurative sense of the word, which consists not so much in

literal signification as in the artistic quality of rousing the appropriate feeling, yet we can well extend the figurative meaning to the representation of the relation between a universal and the particular items comprised in it. Thus we can say that every particular is an incarnation of its universal. But the fact is perhaps that the term, incarnation, was first used in a strictly philosophico-religious sense, and that later it was adopted as an element of the language of our everyday experience. It is very difficult, though not impossible, to ascertain the time when it was coined and the person who came to make use of it for the first time. So leaving aside the problem of the origin and first use of the word, interesting as it is,

let us proceed to analyse the different ways in which it can be taken.

Merely positing a supreme Being at the back of the universe does not necessarily entail the notion of Incarnation; for it is quite possible to conceive Him after the manner of the Deists to be ever transcending the world of creation. The monotheistic religions glory in the unity of the Deity, but the unity of God, which is made the platform upon which is reared the structure of universal brotherhood, is found on inspection to be exclusive of the universe. So God is conceived as jumping down at times over the gulf to regulate the course of His creation, or as occasionally sending messengers to mankind to help them towards proper adjustment to their environments. Hence the conception of a prophet or nabi. Some have gone so far as to assert that every tribal religion has its prophets or nabis. Whatever be the value of this conception of a prophet in the practices of religious life, there is manifestly a long stage from the conception of a prophet to that of an Incarnation, though there is no denying that an Incarnation in the full sense of the term bears about it a sense of message or mission.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the illusionists the question of an Incarnation of God does not arise at all, or if there be any, it is pointed out that an Incarnation of God must be an element within the major illusion, *viz.*, this world. Here we need not bring in the problem of the ultimate nature of Reality and its actual relation to the world. We may, on the contrary, take an Incarnation as a phenomenon in the religious, or rather spiritual world, and see what possible view of the nature of Reality

we can obtain therefrom. We shall, however, do well to ascertain the import of the word, Incarnation, as used in the religious world, and in this attempt we shall do no better than draw upon the usage and some aspect of the spiritual tradition of the world.

To begin with, an Incarnation is to be distinguished from a saint or a religiously-inspired person; for a saint represents more an ascent to God than a descent of the Divine. Strictly, however, one cannot be separated from the other. If God is not, like an absentee landlord, a transcendent Being, but is immanent in the universe, in the sense that every thing is real only in the reality of His being, spiritual progress or lack of it is not a question of less or more of physical distance between God and the human person concerned. Spiritual life and development then turns out to be a matter of unfoldment of the innermost essence of our being. So the ascent of the finite spirit, potentially infinite, and the descent of the Divine are, in the ultimate analysis, two sides of the same process, or rather the same process looked at from two different points of view; for the finite spirit is elevated in so far as its infinite potential nature unfolds itself. This ascent of the finite, and, for that matter, the descent of the Divine manifested on the spiritual plane is the fundamental principle in its broad features, which is working through the whole course of evolution.

We can then distinguish between three distinct stages of the descent of the Divine. First, Creation, which is not to be conceived as a temporal act, but as a manifestation, can be conceived as the descent of the Divine under the veil of ignorance or nescience. But that descent does not in

any way impair the spiritual essence of God as infinite. On the contrary, it is because of the divine essence being deposited, so to speak, in the descent itself that the ascent of the empirical or the human to the Divine is being effected; otherwise the Creator would end in annihilating altogether the divine essence just as an egg reduces itself to a broken shell by evolving a chick out of it. So the whole course of evolution from matter to consciousness represents progressive penetration of the veil of nescience, and revelation of the fundamental Reality in which this world of ours is grounded.

This progressive unfoldment of the Spirit through Nature is made articulate in the emergence of the religious consciousness in the human beings. A finite spirit or a human soul in its spiritual practices disciplines itself with a view to consciously grasp what it in its ordinary course of experience only vaguely imagines, and its progress or development is proportionate to the descent of the Divine. But this descent or ascent is, as has already been indicated, nothing peculiar in itself, but is continuous with the general principle working in the evolutionary course.

There is yet another sense in which the descent of the Divine can be conceived. So far we have dealt with the descent of the Divine as a philosophical or metaphysical category. God has been conceived as going out of Himself, yet remaining within Himself for the purpose of creation. He is also conceived as coming down to the level of the finite spirit, assuming human shape, and unlike His creatures, with full knowledge or consciousness of Himself, and that He does out of His love for His devotees,

and ultimately to direct the courses of civilization towards its proper goal. Thus we are told by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita: " Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, I come down to help mankind ". When in the march of human civilization a need for a new adjustment arises owing to some circumstances, " a wave of power " comes down. As man is not merely a material body, but is spirit with a material basis in his empirical existence, the directing force must come from the spiritual plane which is the invisible topmost plane of the universe of which this world of ours is a visible fragment. But this is not to say that there can be no crisis on the physical plane. The course of evolution at its different stages points to adjustments of the evolutes to their environments. With the emergence of the human beings on earth that adjustment took on a new significance. Mankind were confronted with an environment threatening in many ways, but they were endowed with enough of intellectual power to grapple with it. Men struggled and have eventually succeeded in gaining a large measure of control over Nature, and a vast scientific culture can now be credited to this control. But the history of man is not merely the history of his struggle with his surroundings, but also of the manner and methods of his self-expression. So we can say that from the very beginning Nature was the basis upon which he sought realization of his self. Adaptation or adjustment varied along with the progressive conception of the self, and in and through this progressive adjustment there came to be developed ethico-spiritual culture, wherethrough by stages human beings are marching

towards the goal, the supreme source of their being. When nescience prevails and makes men forgetful of their divine destiny, when vain intellectualism fills their minds with arrogance and materialistic ideas and creates a screen between their empirical being and potential spiritual essence, the Divine, in spite of His transcendental directing of the evolutionary course, descents in human form and moves about in the midst of mankind to give them guidance and light. "The teacher is God Himself descended into humanity." The Divine being is infinite and eternal, nothing can fall beyond Him. All existence is after all a manifestation of God, so every conscious being can be conceived as a descent of God. But this descent is effected under the veil of ignorance. But when God incarnates Himself in human body and mind with human modes of activities and speech, He does that out of His infinite knowledge. In the words of Aurobindo, "It is the conscious descent of the God-head; it is the Avatar."

Now this doctrine of Incarnation, which is firmly rooted in the Hindu culture, is more a matter that relates to religious or spiritual experience than a tenet formulated on a speculative basis. Strictly, however, the doctrine of Avatar is an enigma to speculative philosophy which is all an intellectual search. Philosophy can cast out its net of categories, but how much of Reality can it cover? Only a fragment of it. If that is large enough to bring within its sweep the whole range of facts from matter to Consciousness, it cannot still be said that the full reality is gathered up thereby; for Reality being infinite and eternal, defies all attempts at an

exhaustive enumeration of the actualities and possibilities that issue out of It. The truth, however, is that speculative philosophy often proceeds with over-simplification which involves omission through ignorance. Thus, we are told by materialists that Reality is all matter, and that the phenomena like life and consciousness, as something quite different from matter, are fictions. Spiritualists, on the other hand, contend that Reality is all spirit in which there can be no accommodation for matter, and this led, as is well known, to the theories of equalism and illusionism. None can, of course, deny that speculative philosophy has shown its power of a synthetic view and searching analysis; but the fact, all the same, remains that Reality always slips through the fingers, in spite of the supposed grasp of it through categories. A philosophical attempt to reach Reality is like a jump from the basement of a house to the top of it. If philosophy can at all be represented as such an intellectual jump, the jumper will first take his stand at the foot of the pyramid of creation gazing at the height, and then throw himself up along the exterior convenient to him, knowing nothing of the vast wealth of Being spread out in the inner parts of the edifice of Nature, visible and invisible to the mortal eyes. The fact perhaps is that a speculative philosopher who does not feel giddy at the height of Being is more a gazer than a jumper, and he is more engrossed in the sublimity than in the beauties of the Supreme Being. Thus we are told that spiritual experiences are abnormalities and God-visions are all frauds; all these influences are pernicious; and all the more so is the doctrine of Incarnation, which is no-

thing short of deification of a human being with all human frailties—a deification which is outrageous to a speculative mind. Indeed it may appear to be so, and it is, as has been already said, due to over-simplification, and, for that reason, to omission of relevant facts.

We may as well compare the speculative philosopher to one who, standing on the beach, staggers at the billows that surge on the surface of the vast sea, and knows nothing of the treasures that lie in the depth of it, while the religious or spiritual aspirant, like a diver, not content with a view from a distance, throws himself into the sea of Being, swims on the surface and then sinks into the depth to emerge with the jewel of spiritual light which radiates and illumines the darker corners of his fellowmen's minds. It is, however, oftentimes the case that the philosopher obsessed with his exterior view of Being unreasonably suspects the inner experiences of the spiritualist.

Indeed, it is very difficult for modern men to grasp the inner significance of Avatarhood. To some it appears as an enigma, and to others a superstition. To still others, on the contrary, it appears as nothing more than a cult of hero-worship. To the rationalist it is a foolishness and to the Deist it is all meaningless. If God is extra-cosmic and external to His creation, assumption of human shape through a human birth is altogether absurd. If God chose to come down at all to this earth of ours, he might have come in His own original form and shape. Further there is an unbridgeable gulf between the Divine and the human; for God is wholly transcend-

ent. So to talk of the Divine in the human is just a blasphemy.

The materialist, on the other hand, will summarily reject the notion; for to him God is not anything more than a mere word. The rationalist will, if he at all believes in God, conceive him as pure spirit, and to him the conception of Avatar—the Infinite or Absolute assuming a human body, a finite nature—will appear fantastic. He will find extremely hard to reconcile it with the omnipotence of God.

These objections may at first sight appear to be unanswerable. But a way out of the difficulty is indicated in an assertion of Sri Krishna, which is: "Though the Divine is unborn, imperishable in His self-existence, the Lord of all beings, yet He assumes birth by a supreme resort to the action of His Nature and by the force of His self-maya or Yoga-maya." The statement may, on the face of it, seem to be a bundle of contradictions, but if we look into the word self-maya or Yoga-maya upon which particular stress is laid, and ponder over its inner meaning and implication, we may get light and understanding. Strictly, the doctrine of Avatarhood is no dogma. It has a rational basis and justification. It is, in fact, a sequel to a philosophical view of things, according to which everything is in God and God is in everything; Nature is the medium of the manifestation of the Supreme Being. As Aurobindo puts it, "Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothing else but that; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form

of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or a body, all here is nothing but that, the world exists only by that connection. All is in God and in Him moves and has its being; in all He is, acts and displays His being, every creature is the disguised Narayana. The assumption of imperfection by the perfect is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe."

All this raises the possibility of Avataras, and this possibility furnishes the rational foundation, and a rational explanation of the phenomena like Avatars that have hitherto happened on this planet. "An Avatar is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below; it is the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal creatures must climb".

## THE NINEFOLD PATH OF DEVOTION

BY G. A. CHANDAVARKAR, M.A., M.R.A.S.

[The following paragraphs describe Bhakti or God-love under a ninefold classification, which, besides being comprehensive, is at the same time gradated into progressive disciplines. Careful and sincere practice of these steps takes an aspirant without any difficulty to the highest Beatitude or that vastness of perfect God-consciousness which is the end of all spiritual endeavour.—The Editors.]

THE history of man's spiritual struggle contains but one main chapter. That chapter deals with his endeavours to become one with the Infinite. It is but the attempts made by the finite being trying to become the Infinite. What a glorious attempt should it be! For this final merge into the Infinite various methods are advocated from time to time. While some suggest the method of Karma or self-less activity and surrendering the fruits of such activities to the Lord, others emphasise the need of Jnana or the contemplation on the True. For the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter, or the deliverance from ignorance, another alternative path is also suggested. That is the path of Bhakti.

During the medieval period of Indian History a mighty wave representing the revival of the Bhakti cult passed over the country, as a result of the preachings of saints like

Chaitanya, Kabir and Nanak. It should not be supposed that that was a new cult in India. For even in the distant past we note the dazzling examples of devotees like Prahlada and Arjuna who are considered even to-day the first and foremost among Bhaktas. The work of the saints of the medieval period was merely a revival of that age-long devotional spirit. In the Maratha country this cult received the emphasis in its ninefold aspect which, by the way, is practically common to almost all the Saints. The mass awakening which was the result of the activities of these great devotees of God and their innumerable followers led to a great revival both in the political and social circles. Simplicity was the refrain of that new gospel. Sublimity was its burden.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to frame an answer for the question: What then were the nine

aspects of this Bhakti which assumed the form of a movement in the Maratha country? In the following Sloka of the *Bhagavata* it is explained clearly. They represent various stages in the devotional assent. The relations between the steps are very rationally maintained in that verse. The Sloka runs as follows:

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः—

स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।

अचंनं वन्दनं दास्यं

सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

Here the first place is given to Sravanam or hearing. It implies that every aspirant should hear or learn from others who are better qualified or experienced. Hearing of the good and great qualities of God should precede the acquisition of spiritual joy. That again suggests the need of a Guru who should initiate the disciple into the secrets of righteousness. He gives the Mantra, a holy text, the contemplation on which makes us realise the significance of Love and Harmony. Secondly comes Kirtanam—chanting the hymns in praise of God. In the Maratha country, as also in some other parts of India, even to this day these Kirtanas are very common. Hundreds of people gather together to hear them recited in chorus. The person conducting it raises to the highest pitch the emotions of the audience and the whole atmosphere rings with the echoes of either Ramanama or Krishna-nama. Thirdly reference is made to Vishnoh-smaranam or continuous remembrance of Vishnu, the all-pervading God. From Sravanam and Kirtanam this step becomes easy. Instinctively one begins to think of the qualities of God; and Mananam starts. The

fourth place is given to Pada-sevanam—humble service rendered to God through man. Seva needs humility, a virtue essential for all the aspirants after Truth. It needs the destruction of the love of power or pride. All the devotees of God have been first and foremost the humble servants of God and man. They have one and all sought the kingdom of God through humility. All the happiness in the world has resulted through the paid or unpaid service of human beings to one another. Likewise spiritual happiness or bliss results from service or Seva, highest type of which is Nishkamakarma or disinterested service. Fifth place here is taken up by Archanam, worship. It may be Saguna or Nirguna form of worship. Both the forms train up the mind and exercise a steady influence upon the wavering tendencies in man. Mental peace is the result of such exercises. Sixthly comes Vandanam—salutation—a form of respect paid to God or deserving men such as teachers and saints. It implies the recognition of the greatness in him to whom Vandanam or salutation is made. One soul greets another soul and recognises the unity of the Parama-purusha pervading the universe. Stand before a great man and salute him; you would witness a thrill of joy running through your body. The response is at once miraculous. *Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya. Namah Shivaya cha Shankaraya cha. Gurubhyo Namah.* Who has not uttered these and felt himself elevated above the sensuous plane? Charming indeed is Vandanam. Dasyam takes the seventh place. Service of one greater than us is really ennobling. The time spent or any labour undertaken that

way has its own reward. It is this Seva that purifies the soul, rubs its angularities and elevates it. Those of us who have lived in any Asrama even for a short time know what its value is. It should be experienced and felt. The giver of alms, clothes and food to the needy alone can realise what the blessings of charity are. So, one who lived the life of doing some kind of Seva in any well-conducted institution can realise the beauty of Dasyam. Some have enjoyed it even in the mere sweeping of a temple or the house of a Guru. We are told on good authority that even bodily ailments have been cured of those that dedicated themselves to the service or Dasatva of Gurus. If so, what doubt can there be as to the fact that service done in the cause of God will give to the doer real bliss? Sakhyam or friendship takes the eighth place. Fellowship of men and love of God, as illustrated in the case of Arjuna and Krishna, are really grand. Said Lord Krishna, "All will be able to reach me as you have done through Love, O Arjuna." What wonders genuine friendship has not worked in the world? The very idea

of a Sangha or a Mission means the ideal of brotherhood for a good cause. How many lives have been saved by such institutions? This Sakhya means love for all. When God is all or All is God, Sakhya becomes indispensable. The ninth place is taken up by Atmanivedana or self-introspection and surrender to His Will. This indeed is the crowning glory of Bhakti. All the benefactors of humanity have exhibited this aspect in a remarkable degree and to that extent they have become great and good. In all the saints one or many or all these aspects were found. These aspects are all illustrated by citing the examples of Parikshit, Vaiyasiki, Prahlada and others.

It is also noteworthy that all these are the aspects of one and the same path of Bhakti. The lustre of the different jewels may appear different, their colour may vary; but the Kanti or charm found in all is the same. It was left to the option of the aspirants to select any one aspect which suited to their temperament most. The final result would be the same.

## PURITY IS STRENGTH

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA.

[These are the notes on the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

### I

You can never divide the world into East and West as far as the essentials of life are concerned. All problems are cosmic problems. You cannot say: Here the East begins; here the West begins. This is a very,

very erroneous and misleading idea and has been the cause of many fatal mistakes in the history of humanity. There is no eastern truth or western truth, but only Truth as such, which is neither eastern nor western, nor anything else but the one and only

Truth.. All problems of the human mind are the same problems. There is no such thing as East or West in this respect. There is no eastern and western mind in so far as the essentials are concerned, but only the human mind. There are differences in customs, in the non-essentials of life; but the human mind always remains the same and its problems are always those of the human mind, not eastern or western problems.

## II

There is this first and a very essential point to be remembered in the course of one's spiritual striving. We should all have a short break after dinner, i.e. in the middle of the day, say at two o'clock or so. This is very useful, but very difficult for many people to practise. For many it is so difficult to have just a little break of consciousness, or just a little break in the hectic and feverish activities of one's mind, to fill it again with the holy name and the harmonising vibrations of the holy sound. We should also make it a point never to read anything worldly—no novels, no fiction, no stories—before going to bed or before falling asleep. At that time we ought to have some holy thought and some holy sound to dwell on. It may be that we are going to sleep in the lap of God, or some other such idea. It would fill our whole mind before falling asleep—the Divine idea and the feeling of the Divine. If we permit ourselves to read something worldly, this goes on working in our subconscious mind during the hours of our sleep and has very bad effects. In the evening we should be very careful as to what we allow our minds to busy itself with, or as to how to get

our mind absorbed. There should be concentrated and peaceful dwelling on the Divine—either the Divine form, or the Divine name, or the Divine sound, or on all three combined, which is the most efficacious way. Only thus can we in time succeed in transforming the contents of our subconscious mind. It is very, very harmful to read worldly books before falling asleep; but we generally do not realize the extent of the harm we do to ourselves by being careless in this respect. The workings of the subconscious mind during the time of our sleep are very important and should not be lost sight of.

There is one more point which should be mentioned: If you awake at night, at once begin doing your Japam in a quiet, peaceful way, without any unnecessary strain. But during the time of your practices Japam and sleep should never become connected. This is very bad. Before going to bed, do 100 to 1,000 times Japam; fill yourself with the holy sound; and make it a point never to stop doing Japam before having reached the number you intended to do.

Habits are to be formed and strengthened. Then spiritual life becomes easier and loses much of its initial strain. Strictly preserve your fixed hours. Then meditation slowly becomes possible even when the mind is very restless. There should be perfect regularity in the hours of your spiritual practice, because only thus does the mind grow accustomed to them. And under all circumstances a certain minimum is to be kept up in one's daily practices. The time of the practices should be slowly and steadily increased in the case of the

beginner. In the case of the advanced student, there will be an under-current of devotion in the mind which enables him to keep part of the mind busy with the devotional practices at all times, whatever one may happen to do outwardly. Before that state is reached the greatest regularity concerning the hours and the fixed round of spiritual exercises are to be observed by all aspirants most scrupulously.

### III

Fellow-travellers can help each other. That is why holy company is of such great importance. There should be mutual help, mutual sympathy; because these help us in sustaining our energy and our striving. We should never try to be teachers; but only students amongst fellow-students, giving others a helping hand if we can, but never assuming the role of the teacher. This is always safe if we know how to remain within reasonable limits. Then we do not become dangerous to ourselves and to others. Then the teachers' mentality cannot sprout up in us and harm us and others.

"Thou art the mechanic, and I am the machine." This is the attitude we should adopt, and never that of superiority. Before you lead others, learn to serve with dedication and self-surrender. Very often we want to lead without proper training. We want to have the fruits without paying the proper price.

The advantage of a small group of devotees is that in a small group all these direct instructions are applicable. It is easier to have a true spirit of sympathy and no backbiting in a small group, even if they be beginners. It is always better to

have first intensive work and then, later on, extensive work.

### IV

We should always act in such a way that we may equip ourselves fully to be able to meet death with a smile. Death should be our greatest happiness. It should be the gateway to Immortality, to be welcomed, never to be feared. This life is nothing but a passing shadow, a phase, a life in a world of unrealities and shadows. Our future depends on what we think in this life, on what we are, never on what we appear or pretend to be.

Whatever be the Truth, follow it. An unpleasant truth is always infinitely better than a pleasant falsehood. Even if this Truth breaks our hearts, even if it shatters once for all our fondest hopes and illusions, let us face It undauntedly. Vedanta is not for cowards or emotional weaklings. No use clinging to falsehood. No use covering the decaying carcase with beautiful fragrant flowers and doting over it! Let the light come under all circumstances, no matter whether the heart breaks or not. Do not care so much for breaking of hearts and shattering of hopes as for Truth and Light. Sometimes necessary operations are very painful; but if the surgeon should refuse to operate on the patient, the patient would die. Nothing is truer than the fact that some day the body will fall off. And we should so conduct ourselves that we have no occasion to repent for having wasted our precious time and our precious human birth.

Our great poet-saint Tulsidas sings: "When I was born, I cried and others laughed. Act in such a way that when you die, you laugh and

others cry." This is the real task of our life. So we have a proverb in Bengal that says, "Do whatever spiritual practices you may be doing; but you must know how to die."

Death is always of the body, never of the Spirit or the Self. So why fear death? Death should neither be courted nor be feared, neither should life be so. The bier is always quite as real as the cradle, the burning-ghat as real as the nursery; but we rejoice at the one and recoil from the other. Why? Why this desperate clinging to physical enjoyment and physical relationships? I neither want life nor do I want death, because life is something infinitely greater than this shadow of life, the phenomenal life. We cling to our bodies and to those of others, to our own minds and to those of others and think we have got hold of life. We have not. We have got hold of the mirage, the reflection of the reflection of the reflection, and nothing more than that, and go on hugging it to our breast. What terrible fools we are! What an inordinate attachment to all that is *not* Life! The true aspirant, he who has true spiritual yearning, neither clings to life, nor does he ever yearn for death, because, to him, neither of them has any reality. We must learn to be wholly indifferent to our life and wholly indifferent to our death; but act in the right way to make spiritual progress, so that we may be able to make the very best use of the short span of life given to us. We need not be afraid of death, neither of our own nor of anybody else, if we just minimise the attachments of life and our personal relationships with the phantoms of others, with the men-phantoms and

women-phantoms of which none has any ultimate reality. Relationships based on the mirage always prove to be nothing but a mirage in the end. You cannot have real relationship with what is unreal and which has no ultimate being.

The deaths of our Great Ones have taught us grand lessons. How wonderful was the passing away of Swami Ramakrishnananda, Premananda, Turiyananda, Brahmananda! The worldly-minded and those who cling to their personal attachments alone should be afraid of death. The spiritual ones do not lose anything. It is just like passing from one room to another. One day, after the Master's death, Holy Mother wanted to put on the widow's dress. But the Master appeared to her and said, "What are you doing? Am I dead? Death is just like passing from one room to another." So she gave up her intention. It is the body that dies, not the Self. We must be prepared to die for a righteous cause without any hesitation; and we must be fully prepared to see others die for it. So our motto is: "To work for our own salvation as well as for the salvation of others." This is what Swamiji wanted us to do, and this is the guiding motto of the Order.

So Swami Vivekananda said, "This body that we nourish with food, let it be sacrificed for the good of humanity, God in man. This mind of ours that we nourish or develop through studies, let it be made use of also in the service of the God in man. The soul, too, let it be utilized for the service of the Lord in man." Thus alone our mortal death leads us to our spiritual birthday.

## V

Follow the higher Law. Care neither for optimism nor for pessimism. Develop this attitude of indifference to everything except to the ideal; learn to be perfectly indifferent to all other concerns, especially those of material life and all personal attachments and affections—to all things that bind us, that stand in the way of our spiritual progress. We must be able to maintain a perfect mental balance without allowing ourselves to be ruffled by anything. We must always hold our mind fixed on the one duty, our heart always set on the Lord, our hands ever busy in His service alone.

The glorious lives of many sages and saints are before us; they show us how to live and how to die. We have only to mould ourselves according to the pattern they have given us again and again. Even if we fall in this battle of life, through newer and newer lives we shall work with renewed vigour. Step by step we shall rise until we attain to our lives' only goal.

The conception of the Self is the peculiarity of the true Aryan. It is not to be found among Semitic religions. This is why Sri Krishna upbraids Arjuna for his "un-Aryan" attitude. No Semitic religion has ever risen to the true Aryan conception of the Self and the higher life.

Generally we ourselves create all the obstacles that stand in the way of our spiritual progress or self-realisation. We think of ourselves in terms of the body and of the mind and do the same with reference to others. Then we go and take up direct relations with them as men or women, and then all the rest naturally follows in due course. On what does this

whole life of the body and of the mind depend? On consciousness and not on man-form or woman-form or child-form. The moment the Self leaves the body, it becomes lifeless. All its charm vanishes. Nobody feels attracted by a dead form, be it ever so beautiful; but what really attracts us in the man-form or in the woman-form is consciousness which we mistakenly identify with that particular body or mind. There is such a lot of blind infatuation in the world owing to this super-imposition on the Reality; and without undermining all these wrong notions and conceptions, all these body and mind-bound likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions, we shall never be able to make any progress. If I love the life of the body so greatly, why do I not look to that on which it depends? I should learn to love the life of the Self, because only owing to Its presence is there any life in the body and in the mind at all. The cause is greater than the effect; and the cause of the life of my body and my mind and that of all others is the Self alone, not my man-form or woman-form or child-form. If I want life and love permanent and unchanging, I must look to the Self and never to any of the Upadhis (limitating adjuncts). But it takes people many, many lives to see this and realize their Himalayan mistake. Swami Brahmananda once told me, "My boy, if you give yourself to the world, your youth, beauty, health, everything will be gone. If you give yourself to the Lord, you will retain them all."

## VI

Sri Ramakrishna always used to say to the women who came to him for instruction, "Beware of the snares

of man, even if he is a very near relative." One cannot attain anything in spiritual life without perfect chastity in thought, word and deed. The amount of real chastity attained determines the whole progress of the aspirant. Everyone should be on his guard with every person of the other sex, be he a man or a woman. Real chastity is infinitely more than the mere avoidance of sexual intercourse.

There is a nice story of Tan Sen, one of India's greatest musicians. One day when he was singing all alone in the forest, the emperor Akbar happened to pass by and heard him. The emperor was enchanted, because he had never heard him singing in such a perfect way and in such a beautiful strain at his court. He felt a little displeased and said, "How is it that you never sing to me so beautifully?" Tan Sen answered, "Sire, how could I? Just now I was singing for someone who is infinitely greater than you, and who is my Beloved." "Greater than me? Who can he be?" answered Akbar. Tan Sen answered, "The Lord, my Beloved. When I sing to you, I just sing to order and am paid for it. But I cannot open my heart. When I sing to Him who is the Author of the universe, I give my whole heart to my song." You see, good music plays a great part in the life of the aspirant and devotee.

Immorality does not mean impurity acquired by extra-martial relations only. Even if one is married, carnal relation with one's wife is really immoral. One can be as immoral with one's own wife as with any outsider. If one leads a sexually impure life with one's own wife, wherefrom is he to get the energy and intensity so absolutely necessary for all real spiritual striving? We should clearly and

dispassionately recognise this fact. We need tremendous energy for leading a higher life; and this energy of ours, which is really one, cannot be wasted through sexual channels, if we want to progress and to really attain something. Spiritual life is not to be had as cheaply as the Protestants think. It is something more than mere morals and ordinary moral life, although morals are the very basis on which it must rest. No, whoever desires to lead the higher life must pay the price fully. There can be no bartering in this.

Sri Ramakrishna was always able to tell the character of those brought into his presence. Once a young man was brought to him while he was in ecstasy. He said, "If this young man touches a woman in a weak moment, he is done for this life, as far as his spirituality goes." Unfortunately, this very thing happened a short time afterwards. All beginners, no matter who they are, have to avoid the company of persons of the other sex (men or women) and always consciously to think thoughts which are opposed to the ideas of sex and their own and others' man- or woman-form. Especially in the beginning the sex-instinct grows in strength in many people. When you water and manure the soil nicely, the weeds will grow nicely too, along with the plants you really wish to grow. So we have to uproot these weeds afterwards. And this we can do only if we are very, very careful as to the company we allow ourselves to be in for the first few years of our striving. Never believe yourself to be too strong to be above listening to such advice. Avoid spending time in the company of persons of the other sex, no matter how pure they may be; for before you

have attained real sublimation, culminating in the transformation of your whole being, concentration influences your sexual imagination also and makes even such pictures more vivid and living as soon as you allow your sexual instinct to be stimulated in any way. This need not be in any gross way at all. Subtle attractions, subtle forms of stimulation, are even worse than grosser forms, because the latter are more easily recognised by the beginner than the subtler ones. Many, many times I have found great carelessness in aspirants as to these points, and many have come to grief because of that.

When you feel any temptation, always say, "Mother, come up. Why stay in the lower centres?" Always try to persuade your mind. Never use violence. Speak to your mind in a cajoling way, "My mind, what a fool you are to run after enjoyment and sex! Aren't you ashamed to do it? You really should know better," etc. This is very efficacious and lessens the strain. Try to address your own mind as a witness, not identifying yourself with it in any way but always trying to stand apart and survey all its movements and desires.

There is a funny story which very aptly illustrates the effects of our carelessness regarding company etc. Once a camel just pushed its nose through the door of somebody's house. The owner first objected to this, but it said, "O I only put my nose in your room, just for a moment. Nothing more." But in fact, it slowly pushed its whole body through the door and then said when the owner objected to its presence in his room, "If you do not like my presence in your house you get out. I do not!" Lust sometimes comes in a very noble dress, in

the form of 'duty', in the form of 'compassion', in the form of 'self-abnegation', as our mind is always out to deceive us as to its true motive. Without chastity in thought, word and deed nothing can be achieved in spiritual life. The mind, as I said, always wants to do harm to us, but it patiently waits for an opportunity to do so effectively. So you should give your mind a good scolding now and then and curb it nicely. After all it is you who is the master, not the mind. Do not allow the camel to come in. If you do you will have great difficulty in making it go again.

"O my mind, thou dost not know how to cultivate the land, and such a fine plot is lying fallow. Thou couldst raise crops of gold on it if thou wouldest but till it." Always say "Why remain down, Mother, (Cosmic Energy) do come up." There should be a deliberate shifting of Consciousness. The Cosmic Energy usually lies 'coiled-up' at the lowest Chakra or Yogic centre, so near the sexual parts. So it should be made to move up higher. Sometimes it is very helpful if the aspirant just touches the higher centres of Consciousness (head, heart, etc.) with his Rudraksha-beads while doing Japam. Feeling the centre physically makes it easier for him to fix his consciousness there.

If the thought of any woman comes, associate it at once with the form of the Holy Mother or with that of your own mother. Kill the sexual thought at once. Do not permit yourself to be in the company of women. In Tantra there is an instruction which says that all woman-form should be associated with Uma and all man-forms with Shiva. And this is of great value in spiritual life. But the beginner cannot do it effec-

tively; so he should be careful about moving in the company of persons of the other sex and talking to them.

There is another effective means of counteracting the influence of some sexual thought. Just think of some woman who never knew what sex-life was; or of some man who never knew what sex-life was. This is most important. Think of some Great One, man or woman, who from his or her very birth was a personification of sexual purity in all its aspects. Dwell on that thought daily, making it form a part of your spiritual practices.

## VII

Our object in life should be to transcend the male-principle as well as the female-principle and to go where there is absolutely no sex. On lower planes of life we see male and female, on higher planes, no sex and no form at all. So there is a verse which says. "Parvati is my mother. The Great Lord Shiva is my father. All devotees are my friends and relations, the whole world is my native-land."

Sankaracharya says, "O Shiva, Thou art my Atman. The Divine Mother is my mind. My Pranas are Thy attendants, and this my body is Thy abode. All these sense-contacts are part of Thy worship. My sleep is like remaining in Samadhi in Thee."

And elsewhere he says, "whenever I go, I am just going round Thee. All the words that I speak are like hymns to Thee. And all forms of ac-

tivities I engage myself in, O Lord, are Thy worship."

Another instruction says, "Keep the eye distant when you see a woman." The same holds good in the case of a woman naturally when she sees a man.

Girish Babu once said, "Naren became so vast that he could not be caught in Maya's net, and Nag Mahashaya became so very small that he dropped through the meshes of Maya." So our task is somehow or other to get out of this, to transcend, to go beyond this Maya, this whole phenomenal world, and reach the Reality. And this can never be done without chastity in thought, word and deed. Unity, ultimate oneness, cannot be reached, so long as one remains physically and mentally tied to duality. There are some who say, "Lord I am Thine." Others again say, "Lord I am thyself." There is a difference in expression, but the ultimate goal is one and the same, when one clearly understands the standpoint from which both are said. In both cases only the Lord remains as the sole actor and agent. The ego disappears. And this should be our aim and should be attained by us all.

Re-incarnation is in no way the most vital point. What is of great importance is to try to get full illumination in this very life. None is forced to follow the spiritual path, but all those who have decided to do so. We should learn to be tremendously sincere and one-pointed and not allow ourselves to be swayed by indecision and doubt.

## LOYALTY

BY PROF. K. S. SRIKANTAN, M.A.

[Mr. Srikantan writes on loyalty as idealised in ancient Indian literature and practised by the subjects of Indian States throughout the ages. While the Sanskrit extract printed at the opening of the June issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* stresses the high ethical standard which the ruler was expected to keep for himself, these paragraphs give us an account of the sense of loyalty which such an exalted ideal of kingship evoked in the minds of the subjects of the State.]

### I

"The King is the foremost among men as Agnihotra is the foremost among the Vedic sacrifices, as the Gayatri is the foremost among the metres and the ocean the foremost among the waters."

(*Mahabharata, Santi Parva*).

THE one outstanding message of Indian history to the world is the message of loyalty. The Hindus as a nation are proverbial for their profound sense of loyalty. It is the peculiar pride of the Hindus to have successfully kept up to this ideal from the days of the Rigveda up to the present moment. The revolutionary slogans like "Down with the King" and "Down with Authority" are foreign to India's tradition and genius. In fact, if there is one outstanding lesson that forces itself upon the student of Indian culture, it is her unique sense of loyalty. In spite of the fact that she has had numerous ruling dynasties of foreign origin it can never be said of her people that they ever organised any revolution to overthrow the power of the king. Revolutions like that of the Mauryas or the Sungas or the Kanvas were the creation of a few wily persons. The people themselves never dared to interfere with royal authority. To whichever community a man belonged, the moment he was made King, he could surely count on the loyalty

of his subjects. Says the *Sukraniti*, "It is the office rather than the personal sovereign that is sacred." The welfare of the monarch and his family was a matter of grave concern to the people. In the *Ramayana* we have several incidents indicating the extraordinary feelings of the people at the Royal fortunes and misfortunes. In fact the banishment of Rama upsets the people more than his own parents. Thousands of his subjects who were determined to follow Rama to Dandakaranya were persuaded to return home with great difficulty. Anasuya was only echoing the voice of the people when she asked Dushyanta : "What country has been made such as has its people pining through separation from you?" Occasions like the birth of a prince, his coronation and marriage were taken advantage of by the people to give expression to their maximum sense of regard and love.

To a careful student of Indian Dharma-Shastras and Smritis, this loyalty on the part of the Hindu causes no wonder. Though in other countries there was a vague feeling that the king was of Divine origin, in India it was considered a fact.

Says Valmiki: "The very Gods enter into the person of the king, and so the king becomes a great Deity."

This idea that the king is a representative of God on earth is current even to-day. To the people the king is an aspect of Maha Vishnu. On the occasion of the procession of His Highness the Mahareja of Mysore, during the Dasara celebrations, one can easily see thousands prostrating before the royal elephant and sending forth their prayers for his blessings. "The very Gods," says the Mahabharata, "do not disregard a righteous king who is truly an eternal God."

To understand clearly this extraordinary sense of loyalty one has to go back to the origin of kingship in India. According to the Mahabharata there existed a sort of 'golden age' wherein existed neither sovereignty nor kings; neither chastisement nor chastiser. All men lived righteous lives, but in course of time greed and avarice set in. Men became corrupt. The Gods were alarmed. The extinction of pious rites and sacrifices on earth threatened them with distress and fall. They therefore approached Maha Vishnu and said: "Indicate O God, that one among mortals who deserves to have superiority over the rest."

Vishnu, finding the mortals unfit, produced out of his own energy a son named Virajas. But the dynasty founded by Virajas came to grief when Vena, one of his descendants, became a slave of his passions. The higher powers intervened once again. The sceptre was entrusted to the son of Vena. The Gods and the Rishis charged him to discipline himself, to maintain and enforce the Vedic religion and precepts, to persevere in righteousness, to look at all creatures with an equal eye and never to act

from caprice. Thus the king according to the Hindu Sastras is no ordinary mortal. He is a celestial being.

"He is Indra; he is Yama; he is Dharma. He sustains and supports everything. He assumes different forms. He becomes Agni, Aditya, Mrityu, Vaisravana and Yama on different occasions. Like Agni or fire he burns sinful offenders with his fierce energy. Like Aditya or the sun, he observes the doings of all and promotes the general good. Like Mrityu or Death he destroys in his wrath hundreds of wicked men with their kinsmen. Like Yama or the God of Destiny he restrains the wicked by severe punishment and favours the righteous with reward. Again, like Vaisravana he rewards valuable services, and fines offenders."

The Sutra and Smriti literature insist upon everyone offering his due share of homage to the king. A mortal who slights a king loses the fruit of all his gifts, libations and offerings to the Manes. Everyone who desires prosperity should worship the king as he himself would worship Indra. Loyalty to the king promised happiness in this world and salvation in the next. "He who thinks of injuring the king comes to grief here and is consigned to Hell hereafter". The king was looked upon as the very heart of the people. Says the Kural:—"Just as all creatures live by their confidence in rain, so also the subjects live by their confidence in the just rule of the king. Even the very seasons were supposed to follow the dictates of the king." The same book lays down in another place: "The king's property is sacrosanct. He who appropriates it meets the des-

truction like a deer touching upon poison and sinks senseless into a deep hell of eternal gloom and infamy."

Obedience to the king was felt more as a privilege rather as an obligation. "The tree that bends easily has to suffer no torture; the wood that bends is not heated." So men should bend before the powerful. Says Gautama: "The spiritual life, the moral order of the world and the existence of all beings depend on the king." The king had to be approached with great respect. Like men who warm themselves before a fire, let those who stand before the king be not too near and not too far. These citations from the Smritis and Srutis are amply supported by the foreign chroniclers. Magasthenes, Fahien and Hieun-Tsang refer to the regard that people had to their sovereigns. Even today we have the custom of giving Rajadakshina in our marriages as token of loyalty. The message of Indian history to the world at the present moment is the message of loyalty.

## II

This deep sense of loyalty was never taken advantage of by kings. On the other hand this supreme confidence the subjects reposed on the king made his position more responsible and therefore more onerous. If the people looked upon the king as God, the king looked upon the country as his God. "The king protects the world: if he protects the world justly, then justice will protect him." Soon after his accession the following significant words were addressed to the king: "To thee this State is given; thou art the director and regulator. To thee this State is given

for agriculture, for well-being, for prosperity and for development." If the monarch was looked upon as God, he also looked after his subjects as God Himself.

The King was expected to look after not only the material but also the moral welfare of the people. Asvapati, King of Kekaya, says with legitimate pride: "In my kingdom there is no thief, no coward, no drunkard, no man without the sacrificial fire set up in his house, no one uneducated, no adulterer, much less an adulteress."

The monarchs of ancient India used the theory of 'divine right' more to serve the people than to rule over them. They realised that there was no 'divine right' to rule wrongly. The chief duty of the king was to please the people; for the very word 'Raja' means 'one who pleases.' In the Hathigumpha inscription of king Kharavela of Kalinga we are told that Kharavela pleased his thirty-five hundred thousand subjects. Asoka seems to have looked upon his subjects as his own children. Just as children have the privilege of approaching the father wherever he be, so also the subjects of Asoka had the privilege of seeing Asoka wherever he was.

Kalidasa makes Dushyanta accept his obligation as a king to protect the weak, the widow and the orphan. He was a veritable father to the fatherless. Somadeva rightly asks: "How can he be a king who does not protect his subjects?" The greatest sacrifice a king could perform was guarding the welfare of his subjects. The welfare of his subjects was his own welfare. The Kings left

the people so contented that a revolution like that of the French or the Russian Revolution was almost an impossibility. If the history of India is replete with instances of profound loyalty, it has also to be admitted

that the kings richly deserved it. Of India it can truly be said:

The kings are by God appointed.  
And damned are those that dare  
resist

Or touched the "Lord's Anointed."

## THE REFUGE

BY S. V. SRINIVASAN, B.A., B.L.

[Sri Ramanuja, the great philosopher saint of South India, has composed three devotional prose lyrics in Sanskrit which are an unfailing source of inspiration to all devout Sri Vaishnavas. The following is an adaptation of one of those lyrics, known as Saranagati Gadya. The great Acharya's original composition, replete with transcendental imagery, majestic long-drawn cadence and exquisite literary embellishment, so consummately suited to express the numinous, defies a rendering into any other tongue. The following tentative adaptation of it by Mr. Srinivasan is offered to our readers who have no knowledge of Sanskrit. It may be also noted incidentally that the aspirations of the superb devotional heart, ardently uttered in this lyric, is so universal in its tone that one notes echoes of it in the words of almost all prominent saints and sages of both the East and West.—The Editors.]

### I

O my mother ! The Mother of the universe ! I humbly prostrate at Thy holy lotus feet, resplendent with the brilliant splendour and ineffable beauty of the lotuses in the garden, which is Thy sacred temple. Thy beautiful neck is adorned with the lotus garland.

Thou art full of the benign holy virtues which are associated with the holy name of Sri Bhagavan Narayana, Thy Divine Consort, with whom Thou art in eternal unity participating in His Divine nature and essence. O Queen of Devas ! May Thou graciously be pleased to lift me up to Thy Divine bosom, the sole and secure Refuge of such as those are forlorn and helpless like me.

May I be imbued, through Thy Grace and intercession, with the fervent spirit of consecrating my whole being to the sacred service of our Lord, at His holy lotus feet, and to seek therein my sole and secure Ref-

uge. May that spirit, with His infinite Grace, be for ever and ever strengthened by the unbounded faith, intense devotion and love, and by the true knowledge and wisdom of His eternal Truth. Gathering the experience of that Love, infinite, amazing and divine, may the zeal in His service continue in me unabated, without respite, in all His manifold manifested, forms, under all vicissitudes of my life, and may I be enabled to realise that the Divine service is the only aim worth living for, the goal of all desire and my salvation; may I also seek Thee heart and soul, vowed unto Thee, drinking the Amrita of Thy sacred Presence.

The Lord says: So be it—and Thou, shalt, verily, be blessed by that Love.

O Lord, Thy nature is the supreme abode of all the perfections and excellences and the infinite benign virtues and attributes. Thou art free from all blemish or taint. Thou remainest unaffected by the finite limi-

tations of beings. Thou art the absolute Reality. Thou art wisdom supreme and bliss. Thy form is wonderful, pure, holy, perfect in glory and majesty and unaffected by Prakriti (Nature). Thy Divine person is the supreme treasure store of all inspiring, ennobling and exalted virtues such as supreme goodness, supreme beauty, brilliant splendour, and perpetual youthfulness. Thou art the vast ocean whence flow the living streams of all holiness, virtue, wisdom, strength, might, power, lustre, freedom, sweetness, tenderness, love, friendship, sincerity, equanimity, mercy, dignity, generosity, dexterity, steadfastness, forbearance, gratitude, hospitality, majesty, valour, heroism, and other pure attributes. Thy will is Truth. Thy will is supreme and it will be done.

In sweet harmony with the wonderful, ineffable beauty of Thy Form, Thou art bedecked with wondrous ornaments of untold beauty and brilliance, and Thy sweet and calm countenance is fragrant with divine aroma. Thou art adorned with splendid ornaments of amazing, wondrous beauty such as diadem crested with jewels and gems, with *makaras* and *kundalas* (on Thy well-shaped ears), with necklaces of pearls and sapphires, with bejewelled anklets, bracelets, and waist-chains, with the *Srivatsa* mark and *Kaustubha* on Thy chest. Thou art dressed in costly Pitambara. Thou wieldest in Thy arms mighty weapons of untold power, the conchshell, the club, and the sword and the *Sarnga* (a special bow of Vishnu so called) and the discus, with Sri Lakshmi, Thy Divine Spouse, in eternal union with thee and participating in Thy Divine Essence and nature

with all the holy benign excellences of Thy attributes. Thou art Lord of Nila Devi and mother Earth, of similar nature and essence.

O Lord! The glaxy of Thy innumerable celestial attendants headed by *Adisesha*, *Vishvaksena* and *Garuda*, holy exemplars of Thy Divine virtues, are ever waiting at Thy holy lotus feet in blissful worship, finding their souls' delight in nothing but the willing fulfilment of Thy Laws and commandments in controlling guiding and sustaining the destinies and activities of the cosmos, according to Thy will and their appointed sacred duties. Thou art the sovereign Overlord of Sri Vaikunta, Thy Heavenly Kingdom, vast in extent, boundless and abounding in unlimited joy, peace and bliss—the Eternal Region where Thy glory and majesty are ever manifest.

Thy Form is beyond the ken of sight and mind of even the greatest of Yogins. Thou art the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all beings, living and lifeless; to Thee Thy works are as if child's play. Thou art the supreme Para-Brahman (the Over-soul), the omnipotent. Thy will is truth; Thy will is supreme and it will be done. Thy desire is truth. O Purushottama! Foremost of men! Lord of men and Devas! O Narayana! Lord of Sri Lakshmi!

Thou art the ocean of infinite mercy, supreme glory and majesty; the august repose of all who seek Thee, without distinction or difference; the supreme comfort and consolation of the afflicted; the hope of the faithful; the sole and eternal witness of the doings of the multitude of living beings, animate and inanimate; the vivifying spirit; and the "unchanging

principle of the changing universe," the Primordial source and support of the worlds; the Supreme Master; the supreme abode of all excellences and perfections which mark Thee off from everything else; the eternal Truth; the supreme will and desire; the incomparable; the *Kalpaka* of the needy; the true companion in tribulation! Lord of Sri, O Narayana! My Master! The surest and safest Refuge of the helpless and the forlorn, I in all reverence and humility prostrate at Thy holy lotus feet and pray, "Make me Thine, my life, my all, my God!"

Father, mother, wife, sons and daughters,

Friends and relatives, Gurus gold and silver,

Riches and charms of the world—

Holy Writ and duties—renouncing these, even, O Lord!

I seek my uttermost repose at Thy holy lotus

Feet which measured the three worlds at one stretch.

Thou art my mother; Thou, my father,

Thou art my kith and kin; Thou my Teacher.

Thou art wisdom; Thou art my wealth

Thou art my All; O God of Gods!

"Guru of Gurus; more

To reverence and adore,

Than all which is adorable and high;

How, in the wide worlds, there Should any others share Thy majesty?

Therefore, with body bent And reverent intent

I praise and serve and seek Thee

Asking grace

As father to a son

As friend to friend, as one

Who loveth to his lover (Turn Thy Face)"

Forgive me, O Lord! my sins of commission and omission by thought, word or deed—the sins of blasphemy and sacrilege against Thee and Thy Holy Saints, and all other grievous and venial sins I am guilty of in the past and the present, O Lord! from all the sins and evil temptations thereto now and for ever.

Forgive me for my age-long abyssal ignorance which veils the bright rays of Thy Wisdom's Lamp and distorts my correct vision of Thy Form and true knowledge and understanding of Thy Divine Nature and the unreal nature of the things of the earth and flesh to which I am bound.

Deliver me, O Lord! from the thraldom of Thy Maya, Thy Inscrutable maid, who with her threefold qualities (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) subtly acts, dragging me down the course of Immemorial Time, along the mighty current of the beginningless and unrelenting Karma, throwing her veil of mystery on the resplendent effulgence of Thy Form, enslaving me in the desires of the flesh, entangling me in the sense passions and desires which beguile and blind me to the bright rays of Thy Divine Light. I pray to Thee, O God! "Make me Thine, my life, my all."

"Of these four  
O Prince of Ind! highest, nearest and best

That last (Jnani) is, the devout soul, wise

Upon the 'one'; dear above all am I To Him; and he is dearest to me!

All four are good and seek Me; but Thine own

The true of heart, the faithful— stayed on Me.

Taking me as their uttermost blessedness

They are not 'mine' but I, even I myself;

At the end of many births, to Me they come,

Yet hard is the wise Mahatma to find,

That man who sayeth "All is Vasudeva."

Make me one of such devoted souls, as thou hast declared above.

Hast Thou not said, "O Partha! only by single-hearted devotion and love the Supreme Para Purusha be known".

Again, "Only by fullest service, perfect faith and uttermost surrender, am I known."

"By Supreme faith Thou comest to Me."

Pray, grant me the spirit of faith, wisdom and love divine which Thou declarest above,—Grant me the strength of will to pass my days in the experience of that Love.

Pray, I beseech Thee, kindle in my heart the undying flames of the fires of unbounded faith, true knowledge, intense devotion and love to Thee.

May the spirit rise higher and higher to the attainment of that faith, knowledge and love, seeking nought else but the realisation of Thy Truth, the unfoldment of Thy mystery, and to find in Thee my soul's delight, in ministering to Thy sacred service—'a service worthy to be embraced and always to be wished for, which leadeth to joy everlasting and the supreme good—and to serve Thee for Love's sole end.'

## II

Endowed with the fervent spirit and desire of seeking my sacred service, devoid of it though ye be, a prey to the

temptations of sin and evil, distracting Thy mind from the path of virtue, though ye hast sinned against Me, though ye hast offended against My Holy Saints, though ye be guilty of the most venial of sins, though ye be beguiled and deceived by all the causes and effects of Thy ego (*ahankara*) which blind Thee to the rays of My light, though ye be distracted by the manifold causes and effects and actions prompted by the natural tendencies which make thee cleave with inordinate affection to the things of the earth and flesh, though ye be passion-bound and entangled in the meshes of sense-desires, their causes and effects, though ye be enmeshed in the folds of *Prakriti*, though ye be fettered in thy endeavours to cultivate the spirit of love and devotion to Me, and to seek My Service, by all the pleasures and pains due to causes threefold, *adhyatmic*, *adhibhautic* and *adhidhaivic*,—causes which tempt thee with vain hopes, inducing thee to do vain deeds, to tread the evil way, cheating thy mind with the vain and various shows of the world—the unresting foe of faith, wisdom and love of My way, My Truth and My Life—whatsoever may be thy other troubles and impediments in Thy march in My Way, if thou will be in spirit fervent, in will constant and in prayer insistent, surrender thyself to Me. By My grace and mercy, the mists of thy difficulties shall melt away, and thou shalt verily be blessed with the strength of will, confirmed in faith, knowledge and love to come into My Presence, and to serve at My holy lotus feet—then, indeed, shalt thou, with sense divine, see the glory of My Form, face to face, and the vast supreme glory and majesty shall be revealed to thee.

By My grace and mercy, and My infinite Love for the devout souls, thou shalt be enabled to pass in glad peace to My Heaven, walking in the way of utmost blessedness and love, accepted by Me as one of my devoted faithful servants, to come into My being, to cleave to me, to serve My will, loving ceaselessly My Supreme Self for love's sole end, thinking nought else but my sacred service as the only aim worth living for as the goal of all Desire—thy salvation.

If thou shalt so become drawn to Me and seek Me, thou shalt be freed from all troubles and obstacles, *adhyatmic*, *adhibhautic* and *adhidaivic*, and adoring Me, ceaselessly seeking to minister My service, and understanding the spirit of absolute surrender of thy self to Me, thou shalt be saved and thou shalt find thy soul's delight in My Love as the sole end, perfected in faithful service; and by true knowledge, inspired by My Love above all things, thou shalt come to the Refuge supreme of thy soul—and realise in full My Glory, My Mystery in all eternity.

Thou shalt be freed from all the troubles and pains, *adhyatmic*, *adhibhautic*, and *adhidaivic*—ever adoring Me, ceaselessly seeking to minister to My sacred Service, ever praying to find thy uttermost repose in Me.

Go and reside in sacred Srirangam in peace and happiness till thy eyelids close in death. At the hour of thy death, with eyes and heart fixed on Me, with sense divine, keeping to the vows of sanctity and the sacraments, not swerving an inch from the way of My Truth, meditating upon Me, worshipping Me, 'cast aside lightly thy grab of flesh as thy worn-out robes,' its gross and subtle elements, in joy and peace.

Let not thy doubting mind waver.

My words are infallible Truth.

Never hath Ram spoken twice.

I never decline to grant the prayer of the devout heart which cries, "Lord! make me thine."

I shall dispel the fear of all beings, promise true.

"Let go those—rules and writ duties. Fly to me. Make Me thy single Refuge. I will free thee from all sins. Be of good cheer."

Take these my words. Rest in peace untossed by doubts, strong in the wisdom and faith of My Truth.

### III

Grant me O Lord ! the grace of Thy Sacred Service and make me even now what Thou promiseth at the end of my life.

Om Tat Sat.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

*Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture: By D. T. Suzuki. Published by the Eastern Buddhist Society, Otani Buddhist College, Showa XIII, Kyoto, Japan. Pages, 288.*

The writings of Dr. Suzuki have been mainly responsible for making the English reading public interested in the life and ideals inculcated by Mahayana Buddhism,

especially in the form it took in China and Japan under the new familiar name of Zen Buddhism. While the previous volumes of Dr. Suzuki are mainly concerned with the religious, philosophical and mystical aspects of this school, and are as such specially addressed to students of comparative religion, his present work is concerned with the life of the Japanese people and their

culture, and therefore appealing to a much wider public.

The essential religious content of Zen is the same as of all forms of Mahayana Buddhism. It proposes to take man to the true spirit of Buddha, which consists in Prajna ('transcendental wisdom') and Karma (love). Prajna gives one insight into the reality of things beyond their phenomenality. When one attains to that, one understands the fundamental significance of life and of the world, and ceases from worrying about merely individual interests and sufferings. And then Karuna or love, which in Buddhism extends even to inanimate objects, is able to spread over all things, as the mind is now unobstructed by its selfish encumbrances.

Zen is, however, somewhat peculiar in its methods of expression and discipline. It has a distrust of the intellect, as it holds that ignorance and Karuna arise from our unconditioned surrender to the intellect. Hence Zen despairs the intellectual mediums of expression, namely, logic and words, and remains speechless when asked to express itself. Its method of discipline, too, is not through lectures and closely reasoned out philosophies. It is entirely practical and intuitional. Often the method may appear even crude and absurd. When a Zen master is questioned on some fundamental problems of life, he may sometimes keep quiet, or utter two or three irrelevant and absurd words, or strike the questioner, or do something else that looks apparently nonsensical and crude. But if the master and disciple are of the true quality, it will have the effect of illuminating the disciple's mind.

From this spiritual outlook, then arises a certain general atmosphere, in Zen, having the following characteristic trends of thought and feelings towards things of the world: (1) Its concentration on the spirit leads to the neglect of form; (2) it detects in form of any description the presence of the spirit; (3) it holds negligence of attention to form as more experience of the spirit, as perfection of form is likely to attract one's attention to form and not to the inner truth itself; (4) the depreciation of formalism tends to make the spirit stand in all its nakedness or aloneness or solitariness; (5) this transcendental aloofness or aloneness of the absolute is the spirit of

asceticism, which means the doing away with every possible trace of non-essentials; (6) aloneness translated in terms of the worldly life in non-attachment; (7) when aloneness is absolute in the Buddhist sense of the word, it deposits itself in all things from the meanest weeds of the field to the highest form of nature.

Dr. Suzuki shows with the help of ample illustrations how these ideals have given its characteristic features to Japanese art, both poetic and pictorial. Japanese poetry is characterised by intense love of Nature and delight in its beauties. But this love of Nature, being elevated by Zen influences, is permeated by a sense of 'simplicity, frugality, straight-forwardness, virility, and unselfishness. Objective Nature and human nature are recognised as one, not in a mathematical sense, but in the sense that Nature lives in us and we in Nature. The representative poet-artists of Japan feel no opposition between nature and man or between 'the restless movement on the surface of life' and 'the eternal tranquillity seen through and behind change.' The real flower is enjoyed only when one lives with it, in it—when even a sense of identity is no more there. This feature of Japanese poetry is largely due to a momentaristic tendency, a characteristic native to Japanese psychology reinforced in a large measure by the Buddhist Welt-anschanung. Beauty is something momentary and even fleeting, and if it is not appreciated while it is fully charged with life, it becomes a memory, and its liveliness is entirely lost. Thus beauty has no past, no future, but only the present. You hesitate, turn your head, and there is no more beauty. The morning glory must be admired at its first awakening as the sun rises: so it is with the lotus. Thus the Japanese people have learnt from Zen teaching how to love Nature, how to be in touch with the life running through all objects, including human beings.

In the field of painting too Zen has led the Japanese artists to concentrate more on the spirit than on the form, and to develop a technique appropriate to this end. "He who deliberates and moves his brush intent on making a picture misses...the art of painting." Draw a bamboo for ten years, become a bamboo, then forget all about bamboo when you are drawing. Thus an artist must place himself at the mercy

of inspiration, more with a rhythmic movement of the spirit which resides in the object as well as himself, and have a firm hold of the spirit and yet be not conscious of the fact. This is a direct result of the Zen insistence on intuition and its disregard of logic and words in spiritual discipline.

'One of the characteristic features of Japanese art is the one-corner style,' which is psychologically associated with the Japanese painter's 'thrifty brush tradition' of retaining the barest possible number of lines or strokes which go to represent forms on silk or paper. By painting a simple fishing boat in the midst of the rippling waters, the artist awakens the sense of vastness together with those of peace and contentment—the Zen sense of the Alone. With the figure of a solitary bird on a dead branch, he helps one to withdraw oneself into the inner life and spread out all its rich treasures ungrudgingly before the eyes.

A symmetry, which means going against the conventional or rather geometrical rules, is another feature of Japanese art. This is the result of the Zen way of looking at things—that is to view the individual as perfect in itself and at the same time embodying in itself the nature of totality which belongs to the One.

The tea-cult is another peculiar feature of Japanese cultural life when the influence of the Zen ideal of aestheticism and asceticism is visible. Tea keeps the mind fresh and vigilant, but does not intoxicate, and it plays an important part in the life of Buddhist scholars and monks. The tea-cult centers round a group of people sipping tea in a small unostentatious hut furnished with austere simplicity. The hut may be in a bamboo grove or under a tree, with rocks, plants, bushes and streams outside. Inside the room flowers are arranged, the necessary tea-utensils spread, and water in a kettle allowed to boil on a hearth of charcoal and produce that whistling sound similar to what pine trees produce when the wind passes through them. Inside the room there is only subdued light, while the fragrance of burning incense helps to soothen the nerves. In such a setting of austere simplicity men of all positions in life gather free from all conventionalities, for the time forget all wordly cares and accidental distinctions of life, and sip tea,

talking of art or philosophy. To the Japanese mind this simple ceremony is full of mystical significance associated with Zen. It stands for the Zen ideal of poverty without indigence, and aestheticism without being divorced from asceticism. The various elements that meet one's senses in the tea room go to purify the senses, and when these are cleansed, the mind itself is cleansed. "The tea-cult," says a tea-master, "is after all a spiritual discipline, and my aspiration for every hour of the day is not to depart from the spirit of the tea-cult, which is by no means a matter of mere entertainment."

But by far the most remarkable part of Zen influence on Japanese culture is seen in the leavening effect it had on the Samurai, the Japanese warriors, and their ideal of swordsmanship. At first it may look strange that Buddhism, a religion that insists so much on love and non-violence, should at all have an appeal to a warrior caste like the Japanese Samurai, so noted for their love of fighting and bloodshed. In the first place, the simplicity, directness, practicality, the ascetic spirit, and freedom from the tendency to philosophising rendered Zen congenial to the nature of the unsophisticated, stoical, and practically-minded Samurai. There was a time in Japanese history when the flower of its youth either went to priesthood or to soldiery, and it was the spiritual co-operation of these two, under the common inspiration of Zen, that created what is known to the Japanese as *Bushido*, 'the way of the warrior.' This concept represents the dignity of the Samurai, which is constituted of loyalty, filial piety, and benevolent spirit. To fulfil these duties two things are required. These are moral asceticism and readiness to face death, and it is here that Zen co-operates with the Samurai's bloody profession. The Samurai must have the idea of death vividly before his mind, and consider every day as his last. "In *Bushido* honour comes first," says a text. "Therefore every morning and every evening, have the idea of death vividly impressed in your mind. When your determination to die at any moment is thoroughly established, you attain to perfect mastery of *Bushido*, your life will be faultless, and your duties are fully discharged." Another text says:

"When you are to measure swords with your enemy, be ready at once to lay down your life before him. As long as you are the least concerned with your escaping safely, you are doomed." The notion of death, on the one hand, makes one's thought extend beyond the limitations of this finite life, and, on the other hand, screws it up so as to take daily life seriously. It was therefore natural for every sober-minded Samurai to approach Zen, which helped him to master death, without appealing to learning, moral training or philosophy. Hence Zen, with its ideal of acting effectively without looking backward, became the religion of the Samurai warrior.

The same elevating influence of Zen is seen in the Samurai warrior's attitude towards the sword and swordsmanship. The sword was not so much a weapon of murder as an instrument of spiritual self-discipline. The swordsmiths made swords with a religious attitude of mind, and dressed them in ceremonial suits. For the Samurai, the sword was his soul. To his mind it represented on the one hand, the force that destroyed anything that opposed the will of the owner, and on the other, the spirit of sacrificing all the impulses that arose from the instinct of self-preservation. In fulfilling the first function it represented the spirit of patriotism and militarism, and might mean destruction pure and simple. It had therefore to be controlled and consecrated by the second function which represented annihilating things that lie in the way of peace, justice, progress, and humanity. The Sanurai warrior therefore carried two swords—the longer one for attack and defence, and the shorter one for self-destruction when necessary.

The Samurai was to train himself with utmost zeal in the art of swordsmanship. This training consisted not only in becoming skilled in the use of the sword but in acquiring a certain moral and spiritual equipment. And this equipment consisted in attaining to the Buddhist ideal of men-

tal control, known as *Mushin* or 'no-mindness.' It is the capacity to keep the mind awake without leaving it abide anywhere. The mind is not then concentrated on any object, nor is it watched. It attains to the state of Immovable Intelligence or the state of remaining for ever tranquil and yet mobile all the time. This ideal is applied to swordsmanship. The utmost degree of perfection is gained when your mind is no more troubled with how to strike the opponent and yet knows how to use the sword in the most effective way when you stand before him. You just strike him down, forgetting that you have a sword in your hand and that somebody is standing against you. No idea of personality is there—all is empty: the opponent, yourself, the striking sword, the sword-holding arms; not only that, even the idea of emptiness is also done away with. From this absolute emptiness there is the most wonderful display of activities. Accordingly the final certificate given to a sword-master contains nothing but a circle representing a mirror which alludes to the Buddhist philosophy of 'great-perfect-mirror-wisdom' or the Immovable wisdom mentioned before.

We have given above a brief resume of some of the principal ideas within the book, so as to make our readers interested in Dr. Suzuki's delightful book. We generally know of the Japanese people as clever imitators, as producers of cheap and shoddy goods, and as soldiers of unimpeachable bravery. Their conduct in China for the last few years has also won for them world-wide unpopularity as blood-thirsty imperialists. But we know very little of the deep spiritual springs of Japanese character and national genius. Dr. Suzuki's book, so informative and delightful to read, gives us a peep into this unknown region of Japanese culture. It will be a corrective to the black picture of the Japanese, which their own statesmen and militarists have helped to create in the minds of people all the world over.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, Report for 1938.

The Report of the above Institution is a record of the sincere and persistent efforts made by the management towards imparting a right type of education, to the present generation of students, through different departments of its activities, *viz.*, (1) The Home proper, (2) The Residential High School, (3) The Industrial School, and (4) Ramakrishna Mission High School, Tyagarayanagar, Madras. The aim kept in view in all its educational activities is the happy blending of scientific culture, discipline and power of organisation on the one hand and the spirit of renunciation and service and introspective habit on the other.

The following is the brief report of the different branches of its activities:—

*Home Proper:* It provides facilities for the boarding of poor deserving students. At the beginning of the year there were 176 students. During the year, 64 students withdrew and 70 students were newly admitted. Thus the total strength at the end of the year was 182. Sixteen students passed S.S.L.C., three passed Intermediate, two B.A., and B.Sc., (Pass), four B.A., and B.Sc., (Hons) and three Licentiate automobile engineering examination.

The important aspects of Home-training such as Tutorial guidance by resident wardens, including a Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission, physical training and games, garden work, hobbies, regular music classes by an expert teacher, moral and religious instruction and celebration of religious festivals, were stressed properly with a view to build up the character of the boys. Mention may be made of the novel experiment by way of transferring to a committee of 15 representatives of the students the task of supervising the domestic work of the Home, such as care of property, keeping the building neat and clean, part of annual white-washing and painting and minor repairs. This association of captains under the name of Sevapravina Samiti worked well and it was conducive to the manifestation of some best traits of character in the boys.

*Residential High School:* The school is run within the precincts of the Home. It has certain admirable features besides its residential character—small classes, simplicity in furniture and dress, laboratory plan of teaching in several subjects, compulsory course of Sanskrit up to Form IV and manual training as an integral part of education up to Form VI. Extra-curricular activities, such as, Seva Sangham, Literary Union, conducting a manuscript Magazine, and excursions, are a few of the notable features of its educational programme.

*Industrial School:* The automobile Engineering course is the objective of this section and it trains students for the L.A.E. (Licentiate in Automobile Engineering) Diploma. The course extends for five years, of which first four years are devoted to obtaining a sound theoretical and intensive training in all branches of automobile Engineering, and the fifth year is spent exclusively in practical work in the Jubilee workshop. The annual examinations were conducted as usual by an outside body, approved by the Industries Department of the Govt. of Madras. The workshop is fully equipped with appliances and the practical training given in the fifth year equips a student to specialise in any branch of Automobile Engineering, after one leaves the Home.

*The Ramakrishna Mission High School, Tyagarayanagar:* The High school at Mambalam which had its beginning in June 1932, continued to prosper, reaching in rapid strides with a strength of 1838 in three of its branches. The boys' Hostel attached to the school continued to be located in a rented house. It is under the direction of a Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission.

*General Finance:* The total receipts of the Home, apart from that of the school at Manibalam, during the year was Rs. 51,573-14-9 and the total expenditure on all the sections amounted to Rs. 51,946-8-9, resulting in a deficit of Rs. 373-8-0. .

In addition to the Government grant and intercessions from endowments, the Home has yet to find annually Rs. 20,000 by way of subscriptions and donations to keep it running on the present lines with its hostels and schools. The management fervently

appeals to the public for unstinted financial support for an eminent institution like this whose educational value cannot be over estimated in these days when the problem of educational reconstruction of the land looms so large before people's eyes.

**Report of the Ramakrishna Mission  
Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar,  
for the year 1938.**

The thirty-eighth annual report of the above institution records that a total number of 28655 persons were given relief through the outdoor and indoor departments. Of the above number 19440 were males, 6,309 females and 2,906 children. The daily average attendance was 145. The indoor department alone treated 1283 cases, of which 11,107 were cured, 113 relieved, 41 dead and 22 were under treatment at the end of the year. The Sevashram also maintained a night school to impart primary education to local children and a library containing 2184 vols. It celebrated the Birthday Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, of which feeding of the poor formed a significant item. The year under report being the year of Kumbha Mela at Hardwar and Kankhal, about 12 lakhs of people assembled in these areas and the Sevashram did active and extensive relief among the distressed patients by opening special branches at Rohri, Bhimgoda and Bhupatwala, besides the Sevashram itself and through the touring relief party. Contingent upon this huge massing of humanity on a small area diseases naturally arose and they called for the attention of the Sevashram; but the Sevashram did other services also by providing accommodation for about 600 pilgrims with a common mess; by organising a large meeting to celebrate the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna; by opening a reading room which supplied about 41 periodical publications free; and by giving relief to a number of women who missed their relatives in the trains and were latterly restored to their families. The total receipts for 1938 was Rs. 36,668-13-2 and the disbursements for the year Rs. 24650-15-6, the

Closing Balance being Rs. 12,017-13-8. The needs of the Sevashram are (1) a Bed Endowment Fund of Rs. 1,40,000; (2) a Permanent Fund of Rs. 50,000; (3) a fund of Rs. 14,000 for rendering the night school stable; (4) a Land and building Fund of Rs. 39,000 for constructing quarters for Sadhus and Residential Medical Officer, Laboratory Building with accessories, for constructing part of workers quarters, purchasing some necessary land and for constructing Drainage and Boundary walls and a ghat.

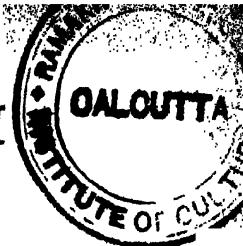
**Report of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama,  
Jagannathplot, Rajkot, for 1938.**

Besides the religious worship and service, the above Ashrama conducts a charitable Dispensary, which treats both in the Allopathic and Ayurvedic systems, and a free Reading Room and Library. In the reported year, 1938, the Dispensary treated altogether 21,191 cases in both the sections. The Ashrama Library had 2,001 books, and the Free Reading Room had 12 periodicals and 2 daily papers on the table. There was a total expenditure of Rs. 7,276-8-0 out of Rs. 7,809-8-3 received, leaving a balance of Rs. 533-0-3. The usual celebrations of the Birthday Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were also celebrated with special worship, devotional music, lectures and poor feeding. The Head of the Centre did propaganda work by touring over Kathiawar and Gujarat. Among the immediate needs of the institution are (1) a spacious building to house the contemplated Residential High School at an estimated cost of Rs. 10,000 (2) approximate sum of Rs. 50,000 to equip the Dispensary better, to open an indoor section and to meet the present recurring expenses and (3) another amount of about Rs. 20,000 for erecting a Sri Ramakrishna Temple and Prayer Hall. We hope liberal help will be forth-coming from the generous public for the fulfilment of the above laudable scheme. All contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Ashram, Rajkot, Kathiawar.

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VICE BEGETS MISERY

According to the Oriental conception, whether a man should be happy or miserable is entirely determined by the Balance Sheet of his good and evil deeds. Therefore one meets with repeated exhortations in the ancient scriptures of India, as the one extracted below to do good under all circumstances, without abusing power conferred by prosperity or nursing jealousy excited by misery.

यो हि मोहाद् विषं पीत्वा नावगङ्गति दुर्भितिः । स तस्य परिणामान्ते जानीते कर्मणः फलम् ॥  
मातरं दितां यो हि आचार्यं च वसन्ते । स पश्यति फलं तस्य प्रेतराजवशःकृतः ॥  
अप्रृते हि शरीरं यो न करोनि तपोऽर्जनम् । स पश्चान् तप्यने मूढो मृगो दृष्ट्वात्मनो गतिम् ॥  
धर्मादात्र्यं धनं गौरुण्यमधमादि दुःखमेव च । तस्माद्यथं सुखार्थाय कुर्यात् पापं विवरजेयेत् ॥  
पापम्य दि फलं दुःखं तद् भोक्तव्यमिहात्मना । तस्मादाभ्यापद्यातार्थं मृढः पापं करिष्यन्ति ॥  
कर्मचिन्म हि दुर्बुद्धेः क्षन्दतो जायते मतिः । यद्यां कुरुने कर्म तादृशं फलमक्षुने ॥  
वृद्धिं रूपं बलं पुत्रान् वित्तं धीरत्वमेव च । प्राप्नुवन्ति नरा लोके निर्जितं पुण्यकर्मभिः ॥

A wicked person who takes in poison through delusion and has no knowing of what he does awakens to the consequence when the effect turns out. He who disregards parents and preceptor will know of its result in the end when he is committed to the King of Death. While tenanting an impermanent body, he who does not acquire moral and spiritual excellence by austere discipline of mind and body, out of his own foolishness, shall have to regret his fate when he passes out of the body. One gets power, wealth and happiness from the unseen religious merit conferred by one's virtuous deeds and misery from unrighteous deeds. Therefore he who seeks happiness must cultivate virtue and eschew vice. Vice begets misery which the vicious person will have to suffer here for himself. The self-deluded man, therefore, indulges in vice courting his own ruin. The inclination to vice too is not a freak of chance; it is the effect of a man's previous acts. If in this world men enjoy intellectual eminence, physical charm, muscular strength, shining heroism, enjoyable wealth and happy progeny, they are certainly derived from their own previous good deeds.

—Valmiki's Ramayana, Book VI, Ch. 15.

## SYNTHESIS IN RELIGION

### I

JUST as there is on the physical side of every living being the biological urge to assimilate nutritive substances drawn from Nature and to develop the co-ordinated self-initiating entity which we call the organism, so also there is on the mental side of an advanced organism like man a psychological urge to arrange, co-ordinate and assimilate continually the knowledge gained from the historical and environmental setting. In advanced stages of thought in man this impulse expresses itself as deliberation, comparison, selection, discrimination and valuation of the data presented to the mind. Here is the genesis of culture. The unquenchable curiosity of man to understand his own reality and that of the phenomena that encompass him goads him on to find answers for his long and wistful enquiries. He therefore scrutinizes and analyses the objects presented to him and finds various sciences. But, dissatisfied by the inadequacy of this process to understand and harmonise the entire field of experience, man turns to philosophies, which are substantially based on the sciences. The progress of knowledge is thus carried onward by the synthetic and analytic workings of the mind. Advanced thought and culture at these higher stages endeavour to interpret the knowledge gained in various fields by instituting generalizations that are capable of explaining the partial knowledge and experience of man by co-ordinating them into a self-elucidating scheme. This is the function of philosophy, which thus becomes a fulfilment of science.

Since, however, the tendency of philosophy as well as of science is to base their findings on the data supplied by the senses alone, the synthesis of these departments of knowledge cannot be clean of the defect of incompleteness. Religion, although it is almost choked by the hard shell of centuries of accretions, in so far as it rests upon a super-sensuous knowledge, corroborated by the experience of certain specialised minds, affords a more comprehensive synthesis that may have better claims for interpreting every other fragmentary experience. Experience includes presentation, feeling and action. Ordinarily under presentation we consider only sensuous knowledge and the memory excited by it. But the possibility of super-sensuous experience, in which a reality of another order is appraised, is the very start of religious assumptions. A cultural and spiritual synthesis of experience which takes into consideration both the empirical and transcendental realms of knowledge presented by religion has, in that way, a peculiarly important value of its own. How far such a synthesis meets the intellectual and spiritual needs of man is in itself an absorbing study which we shall engage ourselves in by taking here for consideration one of those attempts, namely, the one made by Vedanta in the non-dualistic setting, as set forth in the Sariraka-bhashya of Sri Sankaracharya, which is one of the greatest attempts to interpret dialectically, supported by first-hand experience, the spiritual and philosophical implications of the principles of Vedanta adumbrated in

the Upanishads. Vedanta is religion rather than philosophy; for philosophy, according to the scientific interpretation, is a pursuit after reality in so far as it is rationally and logically apprehensible. Even value, it only discusses objectively. Vedanta is, on the other hand, a search after, and conquest of, a final value, which turns to be none other than the Reality. It therefore partakes of the character of the former more than that of the latter; religion is above all, by universal admission, the conservation of value.

## II

One may have noticed in the hands of well-dressed, picturesque church-goers, on Sunday mornings, the shining superbly bound Holy Book of Christianity. Similarly other religions too have their bibles, whether bound in a single volume or in many volumes. And all these Holy Books,—although there is a class of bibliolaters playing the role of scientific students in anatomising the Sacred Books of other religions with much critical ado and giving the suggestion to the ignorant that their Holy Book alone is, as if it were, dropped from heaven, a finished product, perfect in composition, well-constructed and arranged in chapters and verses, with unassailably unity of authorship, theme and execution as the single volume edition might proclaim,—each one of them can be dissected historically, linguistically, chronologically and even psychologically, whether they are one-volumed or multi-volumed, because each scripture forms in itself a library of information ranging very widely, and often thrown together in a higgledy-piggledy fashion, without the least

suggestion of a unity in authorship time or geography, if we are to appraise them with modern standards of historical criticism. Yet all these great books have been very potent unifying forces, which is seldom the case with any other literary survivals or monuments; for no other books have ever succeeded so much in inculcating the quality of reverence and righteousness in the minds of man and heralded into his heart light from regions inaccessible through the usual channels of knowledge. To this great power of the Scriptures the mental destiny of mankind has been committed for untold centuries. Culture and knowledge have advanced all along centering round these great Scriptures in all parts of the world; and even to-day they command authority and reverence as the veritable repositories of spiritual, ecclesiastical and civil laws and facts.

For the Hindus this great synthesizing power is invested in the Veda for several centuries. A Hindu is a Hindu, in the religious sense, only because he considers the Vedic lore as the sheet-anchor of his life; either knowingly or unknowingly, he allows his thought and action to be governed by the Vedic scheme of duties and views, on the implicit faith that that Scripture forms an irrefragable authority by its own right, and an unflickering lamp of wisdom to illuminate his dark path. Even secular thoughts and duties are intelligently subordinated to the central purpose of the Veda, namely, to illuminate the ends of human life. Veda is rendered superfluous, and even void, if the knowledge revealed by it is come by through any other channel—through reason or logic, even

though they may be highly serviceable in elucidating the meaning thereof. The same principle of jurisprudence, which renders null a legal enactment if any part of it is invalidated by some defect, is applicable in the case of the Holy Writ also, according to accepted canons of criticism; they too have a purpose in every part which gives them an inherent unity despite the multiplicity and variety of their content and composition. The Veda to the Hindu is thus a vehicle of culture round which rally everything else like a cluster of satellites shining in borrowed light.

It is interesting to study how the Veda integrates the whole domain of human thought and activity by affiliating every activity and knowledge to a main purpose. Every conscious action, according to the Vedic conception, must serve some end of man positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, immediately or in the long run. This central purpose is the avoidance of pain and acquisition of happiness, as it is natural for every creature to exert in that direction. The quest of happiness in this earthly existence or in the sublimated extension of it in the heavenly regions on the one hand, and the realisation of a distinct end to be achieved out of temporariness, constitute the main idea to which the whole of Scriptural, and even secular ideals, in harmony with its spirit, address themselves. The conception of the welfare of man as an individual being, called *Abhyudaya* and an ultimate beatitude attainable by him at the stake of the cramping individuality in favour of infinity and eternity, called *Nirreyasa*, sum up the main purpose emphasised in the

Scripture. If any part of the Veda is ineffectual in shedding light over these ends—*Purusharthas*—the whole Veda is rendered invalid; but it has been pointed out by a brilliant galaxy of divine personalities and sages like Vyasa and Sri Sankara that every part of the Veda is incidentally or directly related to these ends. Every code and every good custom in India is framed into this scheme, *ex post facto*.

But in regard to facts and events lying within the province of direct sensuous knowledge, there is no need of calling in the authority or sanction from a region outside it. The Vedas are therefore principally a means and a guarantor of valid knowledge in reference to facts lying beyond the realms of empirical knowledge. Such a testimony can be authoritative, again, only by being a permanent source and not a chance composition of some casual author. Naturally, therefore, the unseen cause and course of good acts and bad acts, works prescribed and forbidden in their light, the nature of soul, worship, duty, emancipation, Reality and the like, which are invested with an unseen being, form the subject-matter of Veda, because there is no other means of throwing light upon these. The cultural capital of the Hindu race centres upon *Karmavidya* and *Brahmavidya*, the one based upon certain arts and observances or creation of specific habits in life and the other upon a supersensuous realisation of another level of knowledge—the former leading to the latter remotely and incidentally. Experience and reason may reinforce the Vedic testimony; they cannot have independent validity in illuminating the central truths taught in the Veda,

because one type of reasoning may be supplanted by another better type of reasoning; and one person's experience, being a private affair, cannot have any special claim for universal acceptance—although both may be contributory to a conviction mainly carried home by the Veda. The principles of Vedanta are entirely guaranteed by the Vedas and Vedanta is therefore called the Aupanishada Darsana; if anyone invokes reason and experience, it is only to corroborate the shaky faith in the Scriptures. In the last section we shall advert to the central facts of this Aupanishada Darsana, as it presents a synthesis in religion *par excellence*.

### III

The ends of human life hinted previously are conceived variously according to situations and views engendered by them. Sacrifice, worship and knowledge constitute the main trends of thought considered in the Scriptures in order of importance from a temporal view-point. Of these the large majority of mankind are fit only for the first two, as they only seek prosperity; and hence the literature covering them forms the largest part. The desire for fulfilling creaturely needs and cravings is the motive which impels the largest number; they are very dimly aware of a soul or individual self; they belong to the class of the 'animal,' blissfully self-complacent in their ordinary round of alimentation and reproduction, and forget pain and suffering no sooner they happen to them. To them pain is no stimulus to thinking. The pinch of suffering and cramping conditions of existence knock at the door of only the highly susceptible

and vigilant few. As the mind evolves to higher and higher levels and the refined mind seeks a transcendental means of securing its ethical and spiritual ends, such as that of the unseen merit of a sacrifice, an effective technique of prayer and supplication is introduced to practice, in which an inter-dependence between the worshipper and the worshipped, *i.e.*, the various gods is established. At this stage, arisen little higher from the animal level, man prays to the 'other' powers for wealth, progeny, power of speech, lustrous personality and all that contribute to success and the warding off of evils. The bulk of the Veda is taken up with this chapter of man's ascent. From experience gained at this stage on can easily find that in acts of propitiating and winning over gods for securing happiness here and hereafter man binds the gods by his sacrifice—sacrifice, at their altar, or his feelings and thought, labour and possessions, through the intricate process of self-discipline evoked by the Yaga or sacred rite. This stage is characterised by a strong faith in an outside divine Agency, as it is testified by his readiness to give-up, though that faith is engendered by a reflex self-regard and an unshaken faith in a transmigrating soul, the architect of Dharma and Adharma. Without any reference to other stages of existence, where one's good and bad acts unfructified on earth must fructify and whereby one may avoid what one has not merited and reap what one has sown, the very concept of Dharma, upon which the Scripture has descended so much, would become devoid of significance. This is the Kinder Garten of religion and the large majority of men being in that

state this portion is far elaborate than others.

Sacrifice soon leads man to the other great idea so closely connected with it, namely, that of love; and in virtue of that quality he enters into a personal relation with the 'Other' whom he had been placating hitherto as an instrument of fulfilling his wishes; that attitude wears out slowly, as the new relation of love becomes more and more established. This is the stage of Upasana or adoring service in the form of worship, whereby man becomes a god. His Object of adoration reveals to him that the various deities to whom he has been praying are but His own configurations. Here, worship and adoration become an active expression of love first inspired by awe and next induced by reverence and intimacy and understanding. What the devotee is now counts more than what he *does*; and he participates in the divine being surrendering himself to his Lord. Here man has left far behind grosser forms of sacrifice and propitiation. However the self-regard which is at the basis of individuality itself is still there, though in an attenuated form; and the readiness to sacrifice is not fully developed into an adoring love, the first condition of which is complete self-annihilation. It is under this upsurgence of a new power of love and worship that man is able to make great discoveries in the realm of the spirit and regarding the ultimate questions of his soul and the universe. The votary who has been praying for prosperity now opens up a new vision of happiness in a long-lasting form associated with the Divine which alone can be permanent. At this stage we find in the Veda, the worshipper is advised to

practise various forms of meditation with a view to fulfill an expanding longing for bliss and freedom. As a result of the various meditations and acts the aspirant becomes a Deva or a denizen of a long-lasting region for acons, which is as good as eternity when compared with the extent or intensity of the happiness of an ordinary man or god. So even very highly sensible men are satisfied with this bliss and freedom available eternally in time. This is the fruit of worship. Man becomes a god to worship the Divine—the highest rung of evolution is reached by the soul. But there are a precious few who after long self-investigation and unrelenting scrutiny come to the conclusion that even this enduring participation in the divine bliss, the highest goal an individual can ever aspire to, has in it the touch of the destructible and limited; and so they strain for something beyond time and causality, and wreck their egoity totally to embrace that Infinity. This in short is the romance of the soul—the main plot of the drama enacted in the sentient world and delineated in symbols in the Scriptures. In the union of the Soul with God is the grand *denouement* of this gorgeous play.

Although the governing purpose of the Vedic lore is as hinted above, this meaning does not lie at the surface. Questioned as to the subject-matter of the Veda the unlearned Hindu would answer: God; at which the historian may frown. But he is more right, because the whole Scripture aims at knowing One by knowing which everything else will be made plain. Just as the logic of language tells us that a sentence is a sentence by virtue of its power of expressing

a central idea which may be elaborated or shown up by subordinate clauses and phrases that have no independent significance devoid of the first, so also the One is the core of Vedic wisdom. That is the premiss on which all else follow. The enquiries found in the Vedanta are not the result of intellectual curiosity or speculative adventure; and therefore the Veda is not committed to the 'carnal logic.' A divine commission to show a path to man, wandering in a world which is but a picture of suffering, sorrow and death,—a world infested with catastrophes and accidents, overspread with cruelty, stupidity, insincerity and insanity,—is the only motive of the Scripture, and if a system of thought can be constructed out of it it is only accidental. Thus perfect emancipation or realization of the Divine or Moksha is the alpha and omega of the Veda, of which the elaborate practice of Dharma form the vestibule.

#### IV

If Moksha is the heart doctrine of Vedanta, it implies a set of axiomatic truths regarding man and the universe. We shall briefly recount them in the light of Sri Sankara's beautiful, synthetic exposition of *Brahma Sutras* which again forms a beautiful synthesis of Vedanta. The whole of Vedanta is an answer to the question, "By knowing which everything is known?" propounded and answered in the Upanishads. It is repeatedly stated in various contexts that that One is Brahman, beyond word and thought—Avang-manasa-gochara. Yet It is described as attributeless, changeless, distinctionless, indivisible,

eternal Witness—the negation of all multiplicity and phenomenality. He is Consciousness or Intelligence itself—the self-luminous light that illumines all. Na cha rupavatvam yuktam Paramesvarasya — says Sankara; i.e. He is Spirit—the very opposite of materiality, and hence formless. He is leagues away from the least touch of Samsara, — Sarva-samsara-dharma-atita. He is the Alone, ever free and ever pure—the holiest of the holy, the same and unsurpassable, Anadheyatatisaya. He is Reality, Consciousness, Infinitude—limitless, bournless, Supreme Being, the goal of the liberated and in reality the immutable, permanent Seer in all—Kutastha-nitya-drik-svarupa. This is all the kind of brief hints we get regarding the unconditioned, absolute Divine; and the Jiva (individual soul) wandering in the interminable phenomenal world, due to his parochial isolation, or as Sankara puts it, Samastatva-anavabodha, buffeted by the vicissitudes of virtue and vice and seeking a permanent, blissful, fearless, immortal haven finds in It his final 'end.' Brahma-jnanad hi amritatva-praptih. Na hi anyatra paramatma-jnanat hitatama praptir asti. Man should find his uttermost weal in Self-realization alone, and nowhere else.

But if Jiva is other than Brahman it can never become That; hence follows the next cardinal doctrine that Jiva in essence is Brahman. Says Sankara: Atma hi nama svarupam. Atma cha Brahma. Brahman-bhavas cha Mokshah—Atman is the central essence of all, and that is Brahman; and being Brahman is liberation. Brahma-darsana ("seeing God") Sarvatma-bhava (realising oneself to be the Self of all) and

Moksha or freedom, according to Advaita, are synchronous; by this realization nescience or 'error' is uprooted and suffering and Samsara cease. This, the great teacher phrases as Atma-katva-samyag-darsana—right perception of the Self alone as the only existence—and Nirodha-vijnana or perfect experience. The utter absence of self-regard or Asariratva is the mark of this realization. It is not a conceptual understanding, because it is the realization of a supreme value—Phala-paryantatvat. It is not the negative bliss enjoyed in deep slumber, for in a famous passage Sankara says that Moksha is eternal, all-pervading like the sky, ever-contented, partless, self-luminous and unrelated to time. Again he adduces from certain glaring texts that Samprasada or delightful calmness of deep sleep, where Prana alone is awake and the Jiva is, as it were, in union with the Supreme Self is transcended by Bhuma or realization of the Infinite Self, which is the acme of spiritual experience. The fact that the 'sheath of bliss' is also a sheath of Brahman is another hint of this fact. The union with the Atman in deep sleep is only a resemblance which is indicated by the use of 'iva' in his Bhashya on Brahma Sutra I: 1.9. Realization is a continuous experience of Bliss. The Knower of Brahman is perfection incarnate and because he sees the Self alone, greed, hatred and the like evils find no room in him; and Sankara is emphatic that if a realized man is still a worldling as before, he is a sham—Yasya tu yatha purvam samsaritvam na asau avagata-brahma-atma-bhavah. In III: 1.8-11 it is suggested that competence in the performance of spiritual duties

is invariably conditioned by moral conduct. It follows therefore that morality, Work and Illumination form in a way a causal chain, the absence of the first barring the succeeding ones.

The above conception of Reality and freedom and the identity of Brahman and Atman fall into a congruous system giving a marvellous synthesis. But the hitch comes only when the phenomena call for an explanation. Brahman is the abode of heaven, earth and all. He is the cause of the universe, declares the Sruti. The multiplicity and change is not apart from him; he crystallizes into the Self of living beings and reigns as the master of all. He is the Paramesvara or the Supreme Lord. Eka eva tu para atma isvarah—says Sankara. In fact Sankara uses Brahma and Paramesvara as synonymous in innumerable places, never suggesting that the second is lower than the first in any sense. In I: 4.14 the suggestion can be read that the term Brahman is employed to suggest the substance of the universe and Parameswara to suggest the uncaused cause and ruler of it. The one is free from all conditioning by adjuncts, the other is as related to the universe. The universe is the index of the inaffable Brahman. We posit all-knowingness of Brahman, because the universe is infinite; we call Him omnipotent, because that is premised by a vast multiple universe which is a germination of immense potentiality. He is the Supreme Master because the whole universe is a harmony, and not a chaos, in virtue of the operation of His laws at every bit of it—Samasta-loka-pari-spanditasya isvara-adhishthanatvat. Sankara's Absolute and God are not

two entities as some hastily think—the one an intellectual abstraction and the other an inferential concession as they would put. In one place he suggests that the one is Jneya or the object of knowledge, or self-identity, as his epistemology demands, and the other is Upasya or object of worship; because no worship is possible without the feeling of the 'other' to start with. In a related consciousness an unrelated freedom is impossible, so to him Jnana alone leads to Moksha though he never understates or underrates Upasana—Mahate hi phalaya Brahmapasanam ishyate. In II: 3.41 of his explanation of Brahma Sutras he unequivocally states that emancipation is the result of a direct knowledge which is got *only* by the grace of Isvara. Some MSS. of the text omit 'eva', but the context shows it is wrong. The absoluteness of Jnana is conditioned by the Sadharan-karanatva, general causality, of Isvara in regard to everything that happens to the Jiva. In III: 2.5 he again states that the Jiva or individual soul, through the grace of Isvara, by devout continuous contemplation upon Him, attains Divinity, when the enveloping ignorance is dispelled by that grace.

But the question of questions is how the impure mutable world is compatible with pure, same, Brahman? It seems, like Sri Ramakrishna, who said that the concern of man is to eat mangoes and not to count the trees and leaves, Sankara also was contented with the guarantee of the Veda, although he was pulled out by the reactionary tendencies of the time to launch on argumentation with the speculative adventurers of the age. He is never for any enquiry

to which no Purushartha is attached. This is amply evidenced in his work Samsara or empirical existence is accepted as co-eternal with Avidya or 'error'. Man is born shrouded in the mist of Avidya and he sees through it the Immortal Reality distorted into a mortal multiplicity, himself being part and parcel of it. The purpose of the Scripture is to dispel the 'error' and subsequent duality—Avidya-kalpita-bheda-nivritti-paratvat sastasya. The Scripture does not enter into any argument with man; it is a sign-post; you argue and disobey it to go astray. But the subjective nescience is not an adequate explanation for an objective universe, a public fact. To this the great Acharya replies: In the rational analysis the universe is only name, form and activity; its existential and intelligent content is Spirit or Brahman which suffers no rival. In a homogeneous Unity which has no 'other', activity and change are unpredicable, because they are related and possible only in plurality. But Brahman as cause of such a vast universe must have infinite knowledge and infinite powers. From the view-point of the soul destined for realization of the One as its own essence, Avidya is the cause of activity, name and form. From the view-point of a flowing universe it is nothing but the will of the Parameswara to become many;—His will, His power, His knowledge, His sport, produce the universe; He is Sarvajna, Sarvasakti and Mahamaya. It is interesting to note that Sankara states Power and capacity to produce illusion separately, the former he calls as Avyakta. It is revealing that he refers to Brahman as masculine and neuter and also in the feminine

Para-devata, in some places. The dynamic aspect of Brahman is identical with the Sakti conceived as the Parameswari Sakti, Mother-Power. The liturgical side of Vedanta as found in the Tantras and associated with Sankara later on is an elaboration of this. There are only faint suggestions, if at all any, in Sankara's famous works that Sakti, Maya and Avidya are quite interchangeable in all their connotations. He is chary of 'carnal logic' here, and expresses: Parama-gambhirasya jagat-karanasya tarkanavagahyatvam. Later followers have worked out his hints and adducing two meanings for Maya from texts like Gita VII: 14 and 15, the former implying Prakriti and the latter Avidya, and promulgated the conception of Viksepa (projection) and Avarana (obscuration), the two

powers of one Maya. What the Advaitin wants is only Purushartha and not logic-chopping. Refuge is taken therefore in the indescribable."

We have thus traced in a very general manner the synthesis attempted by religion to read the meaning of life and its activities, basing not only on empirical experience but also on the perception of Truth. It is a synthesis, spiritual, ethical and cultural at the same time. Authority of a scripture, evolution of the human soul and integration of the individual to the whole, are all implied in this synthetic presentation. A better view of life and its goal is hardly met with, because this synthesis takes into consideration every level and implication of experience, empirical and transcendental, as has been suggested at the outset.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DISCIPLE

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.—The Editors.]

SURENDRANATH BHAUMIC and Dr. Durga Prasad had been staying at the house of the Holy Mother. They would depart that afternoon. In the morning, after their bath, they came to the Holy Mother and saluted her. She blessed them by placing her hand on their heads and then asked them to take their seats. After the exchange of a word or two Surendra said to the Holy Mother, "Mother,

while worshipping the Master I find one difficulty; suppose a devotee has a general belief that his chosen Deity and the Master are one and the same. He worships the Goddess through the image of the Master. Afterwards he surrenders the result of the Japam to the image of the Master uttering the words, 'Oh, great Goddess, through Thy grace....'. This creates a confusion in my mind." The Mother

said with a smile, "Let that be, my child; our Master alone is Mahesvara and Mahesvari as well. He alone is the embodiment of all Gods. He alone is the embodiment of all mystic syllables. One can worship through him all Gods and Goddesses. You can address him as Mahesvara as well as Mahesvari."

Surendra: Mother, I cannot concentrate my mind during meditation at all.

Mother: Let that be. It will be enough if you look at the picture of the Master. The Master was ill at Cossipore. The young disciples used to attend upon him by turn. Gopal also was there. One day instead of serving the Master he went for meditation. He meditated for a long time. When Girish Babu heard of it, he remarked, 'The one upon whom he is meditating with closed eyes is suffering on a sick bed; and, fancy, Gopal is meditating upon him.' Gopal was sent for. The Master asked him to stroke his legs. He said to him, "Do you think I am asking you to stroke my legs because they are aching? Oh, no! In your previous births you did many virtuous things; therefore I am accepting your service." Look at the picture of Sri Ramakrishna, and that will be enough.

Surendra: Mother, I do not succeed in regularly counting the beads three times a day.

Mother: Let that be so. Think of the Master. Perform your Japam whenever you can; at least you can salute him mentally. Can't you?

Durga Babu: Mother, I do not quite understand what rules one should observe regarding his meals.

Mother: The Master was very particular about one thing in regard

to food. He used to forbid all the devotees to eat the food of the Sraddha ceremony. He used to say, it injures one's devotion. You may eat at will, apart from this; but remember the Master when you do so.

Durga Babu: Mother, while performing my duties at the hospital many a time I feel thirsty; I feel compelled to drink water irrespective of place and persons. As a matter of fact, I do so. What do you say to that, Mother?

Mother: What else can you do? You do it in connection with the discharge of your duty. Remember the Master while you drink the water. As you do this, while on duty, it will not injure you. Is it ever possible for those who are called upon to perform various odd duties to observe all religious injunctions regarding food?<sup>1</sup>

Surendra: You see, Mother, we householders live in families with many relations. Sometimes it happens that while the food is being cooked, some members of the family

<sup>1</sup> It appears that the Holy Mother did not approve of food being touched by anyone and everyone. Referring to this she remarked one day at Jayarambati. "The Master one day said to some of his disciples, 'This very moment I can eat food touched by cobblers and scavengers; but if I do so, you will wipe out all distinctions.' During the last illness of the Holy Mother the doctor prescribed a loaf of bread for her. At this she said to the disciple who recorded this conversation, "My child, during these last days of my life, please do not give me any food to eat that has been touched by Mussalmans." But the loaf of bread that was given to her was actually made by a Brahmin. Later on she was given a milk roll and was told it had been made by machine. It was also found that sometimes she ate food cooked by her Sannyasin disciples who did not belong to the Brahmin caste.

partake of it; later on that food is brought to me. I hesitate to offer that food to God.

Mother: That is inevitable in the case of householders. We also have to face similar<sup>2</sup> situations. Take an instance; there may be a sick person in the family. Part of the food may be kept aside for him, but when food is placed on a plate remember the Master, think that he himself has given this food and then eat it. That will not injure your devotion.

Surendra: Mother, how shall I describe to you my mental condition? You are the inner guide. You understand everything. I have been undergoing all these sufferings for the last few years: but for your blessings, perhaps I would have been dead by this time.

Mother: Yes, my child, you do not have to tell me of the suffering in the

<sup>2</sup> At Jayarambati, when the children asked for food before the offering was made, the Holy Mother would scold them saying, "To eat now! The food has not yet been offered at the Shrine." One day her brother had to leave home early in the morning on some business. The Holy Mother cooked for him separately. She did not allow him to eat the food that would be offered later on at the Shrine. One child, Maku, asked for a fruit. The Holy Mother offered it first. She was ill; after great persuasion, she was made to take her meal before the offering was made at the Shrine. Of course, she offered her own food to the Master before she partook of it.

life of the world. There is no limit to it. In your case it is inevitable. Look at me, my child, what sort of life I am leading!—by the will of the Master. How much I am suffering on account of this girl (referring to Radhu).

Surendra: Yes, Mother, your condition gives us consolation and hope. You yourself know the suffering of the world, therefore we can expect your compassion.

Mother: Don't be afraid, my child. The Master is there. He alone will protect you, both here and hereafter.

Surendra: Mother, we are living so far away. Are dreams real?

Mother: Yes, they are. Dreams regarding the Master are real. But he forbade his disciples to narrate, even to him, dreams regarding himself.

Surendra: Mother, we do not know what the Master was like. We have not seen him. But in our case, the Master or anyone else, you are everything.

Mother: Don't be afraid, my child, the Master will look after you. We will watch over you here and hereafter. He will protect you always.

After the meal the two devotees took leave. Uncle Baroda accompanied them. He was going to Calcutta. The Holy Mother walked part of the way with them and looked on until they disappeared.

## THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT: HIS DIVINE NAMES AND FORMS

BY AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA, M.A.

[One of the grounds for rating Hinduism low often put forward by some of the adherents and admirers of Islam and Christianity, mainly based on their dangerous little knowledge, is that, while those two religions clearly and simply present one God, one law, one theology and one church, the Hindu Faith offers a tangle of cults, creeds, sects, Gods and customs, to the utter confusion of its followers, who are to grope in a wilderness of pathless polytheism, without the light of saving faith in the one God and the one church. The unwary victims of missionary proselytization are attracted by this plausible argument, soon to find for themselves the existence of most of these 'defects' in the new fold also. The writer of the following article lucidly interprets the *raison d'être* and value of the various forms and practices and their relation to the One Spirit, which no denominationalist can afford to forget, without knocking the bottom out of the particular form of faith which, as a religious aspirant, he adopts for his spiritual progress.—The Editors.]

ONE of the most magnificent achievements of the Hindu spiritual genius is the realisation that the same infinite and eternal Absolute Spirit is conceived and worshipped by men in diverse names and forms and that different religious systems are only different ways of approach to the same ultimate goal. So long as men cannot transcend their finitude, their conceptions about the Absolute Reality must necessarily be relative and in the polymorphous human society, there must always be psychological and rational grounds for the growth of a variety of such relative conceptions, which again must find expressions in a variety of significant names and forms. On account of inevitable temperamental, environmental and educational differences among men, the forms of physical, intellectual and emotional self-discipline necessary for the realisation of the Absolute Truth must also vary. All these differences continue so long as the Supreme Truth, which is identical with the Supreme Good and Beauty, is not perfectly realised by

the human soul and it has not thereby transcended its finitude. When the Truth is fully realised, all differences vanish, all sources of disharmony and discord disappear, and Absolute Unity reigns in the consciousness.

When after the realisation of the Absolute Truth, the human mind comes down again to the planes of our normal sensuous experience, all the diverse objects of internal and external experiences appear as the manifestations or appearances of the same non-dual Reality, as existing from, by, in and for, the same Absolute Spirit. All forms of knowledge, emotion and action also appear as the diversified expressions of the same Spirit's self-consciousness, self-enjoyment and self-realisation. The same God appears to such a truth-seeing mind as one and many, as eternally nameless and formless and eternally manifesting Himself in various names and forms, as above all distinctions of good and evil and at the same time embodying Himself in the diverse forms of good and evil. Such a mind can enjoy the companionship

of God everywhere, in all the fields of its phenomenal experience, in all the human relations, in all the affairs of the human society and the events of nature. It brings down the Supreme Spirit to all the phenomena of the world and sees Him playing in this world in various garbs and under various conditions. These experiences of the truth-seeing mind are described in various forms of poetic imagery and presented to the people of the world for the purpose of attracting their world-intoxicated minds towards the Supreme Player and putting them in the path of the realisation of His transcendent nature. The sentiments of awe, wonder, admiration, reverence and love are roused by these descriptions in the popular minds, and they seek for direct communion with Him, Who is smiling behind and playing with all these diverse kinds of phenomena in and around them. The *Leela* of God in the world, as experienced and enjoyed by the truth-realising minds, thus constitutes a bridge between God the Absolute and the popular minds.

The Hindu religious teachers and the books embodying their experiences proclaim that the eternal and infinite Supreme Spirit, who is one without a second, who is above time and space, who is untouched by any change or modification, appears in His *leela* in diverse names and forms in relation to diverse circumstances and thereby makes Himself easily accessible to the self-forgetful world-bound finite spirits suffering under the domination of these circumstances and attracts them towards His essentially transcendent blissful nature. Hence the apparent diversities of the duties, the sensuous forms attributed to them, the stories related about them,—all these have

their deeper spiritual significance and they are all based upon the spiritual experiences of different truth-seeing minds.

In the Hindu society the Supreme Spirit is worshipped in various names and forms, such as Siva, Kali, Krishna, Rama, Surya, Ganesa, and so on. However different these divine names and forms may be and however different may be the anecdotes and parables that have grown round them, no enlightened mind thinks that they refer to essentially different Beings. None but those whose minds are wholly under the domination of the sensuous experiences of the lowest planes cherish the idea that the audible names and the visible forms and the phenomenal activities associated with them pertain to the ultimate character of the Supreme object of this worship. The Scriptures upon which they rely for their guidance do not by any means encourage such an idea.

All differences lie in the names and forms, with the help of which the different religious sects think of and meditate on the Absolute Ground and Self of the universe, and in the allegorical descriptions by means of which the relations of that Supreme Spirit to the diverse orders of human beings and worldly phenomena are sought to be represented by them. When we dive deep into the inner meanings of these divine names and forms and the spiritual and philosophical significance of these descriptions, we find that they all refer to the same Being, Who is the source of the universe, the Self of all selves, the Power behind all powers. All the Scriptures also distinctly point out this truth and proclaim that these holy names and forms and descriptions are intended

to release the human mind from the lower sensuous planes and to advance it progressively towards the highest spiritual plane of consciousness, in which the true noumenal nature of the Supreme Spirit would be perfectly realised and the names, forms and descriptions would be wholly transcended. The mind, being disciplined in the habit of realising Divinity in particular significant names and forms and seeing the Divine hand in particular kinds of phenomena in the human society and the physical nature, learns step by step to spiritualise and divinise all names and forms and phenomena, to see God in all, and all in God.

It is to be carefully noted that in order to form a true conception of the ultimate significance of any Divine Name and Form, *i.e.*, any Deity, chosen by any particular religious sects for spiritual culture and advancement towards the Absolute Truth, a thoughtful and earnest study of the best spiritual literature of that sect is essentially necessary. The spiritual significance of the name and form of Krishna and the activities through which His spiritual nature is exhibited ought to be sought after in the Vaishnava literature and may not be discovered from the study of the references to Krishna in the literature of other sects. Similarly Siva has to be known and conceived in the light of the Saiva scriptures, Rama has to be known and conceived in the light of Ramayat scriptures, Sakti has to be known and conceived in the light of the Sakta scriptures, and so on. Krishna, as conceived by the sectarian Saivas or Saktas or others, may not indicate the same Spiritual Personality, for whom Krishna of the Vaishnavas stands. The name of

'Krishna' may not have the same spiritual significance to others as to those who adopt it for their spiritual self-realisation. Similarly the Supreme spiritual idea roused in the mind of a Siva or a Sakta by the name of Siva or Kali may not be roused by these names in the mind of a Vaishnava or a Soura or a Ganapatya, who may be inspired with the same idea by the name of Krishna or Surya or Ganesha. But an impartial inquirer will find that the Krishna of Vaishnavas, the Siva of the Saivas, the Kali of the Saktas, the Surya of the Sauras, etc., are the different names and forms indicating the same Absolute Spirit, the same ultimate ground of the universe, the same Supreme Self of all living beings, only differently named and sometimes differently conceived. This is also true of the God of the Christians, the Allah of the Mahomedans, the Buddha of the Buddha worshippers and so on. The different religious sects may differ in their philosophical conceptions about the Absolute Reality, in the names by which they indicate that Reality, in the forms by which they try to picture it before their eyes, in the modes of their self-discipline and approach to the same Supreme Ideal. But the ultimate object of their worship and the ultimate goal of their life are always the same.

It is the infatuation of the sectarian worshippers for particular names and forms and modes of expression and their comparative inattention to or forgetfulness of the true spiritual nature of the Supreme Reality whom they seek or ought to seek to realise with the help of the names and forms and modes of expression, that is in most cases the cause of their narrow outlook and of the quarrels among the

different religious sects. Even many sincere Sadhakas often forget that they enter into particular sects or churches, adopt particular names and forms as the embodiments of the Supreme Spirit and resort to particular systems of religious discipline, not for the purpose of creating fresh bondages for the mind and the soul and being confined to them throughout life, but for the purpose of being emancipated from all bondages and limitations, for the purpose of transcending the diversities of names and forms and the varieties of thoughts and affections, for the purpose of rising above all narrow sectarianism and churchiness and entering into the blissful realm of the Infinite Eternal Absolute Reality. The sects and churches, the Divine names and forms, the particular modes of religious culture, are intended to be paths to the nameless and formless, changeless and differenceless, absolute and universal blissful Reality; but they not unoften become additional barriers in the way of the realisation of this Supreme Spirit; the Sadhakas, under the influence of Avidya and egoism and attachment, mistake the particular paths for the goal, become addicted to them and cherish the anti-spiritual feelings of hatred and hostility towards other paths. The organisations which are founded by the illustrious world-teachers with a view to bring God nearer to the human mind and to establish the kingdom of Heaven on earth, are in many cases taken possession of by the powerful Evil one, the worldly Ego, who converts them into suitable instruments for carrying on his anti-God movements in the human society in the names of God Himself. Whenever there is the absence of spiritually enlightened

Acharyas in any church or sect, it is in danger of being converted into an organisation in which Satan can move more freely than even in the political and the economic worlds.

In order to ward off the Satanic influences which undue attachment to particular names and forms is likely to exert upon the religious systems and to keep them free from bigotry and fanaticism and mutual hatred, all the authoritative Hindu scriptures and their enlightened interpreters have specially emphasised the point that so long as any devotee fails to recognise the living presence of the Supreme Object of his worship in every name and form, he ought to know that his Deity has not yet unveiled Himself to him and he has not yet attained that spiritual insight which alone can liberate him from all worldly bondage and sorrow. The sectarian scriptures have no doubt attached special importance to particular names and forms which have been allotted the central position in them and round which the particular systems of religious discipline have been evolved. But their intention is not to create differences and to lower down other sacred names and forms, but to intensify the devotion of the worshippers to those special names and forms, which they adopt for the realisation of the Supreme Spirit. It is however pointed out that any disregard of other names and forms of the same Supreme Spirit and any idea of real separateness among the apparently different deities would stand in the way of spiritual advancement. The more a devotee realises the glory and the true nature of the object of his worship, the more he finds that He is the one non-dual spiritual Self not only of all gods and goddesses, but

of all names and forms which constitute the phenomenal universe—of all actual and possible objects of his experience. The essential unity of all gods and goddesses and the ultimate spiritual unity of all beings in the universe ought to be kept in view,—this truth ought always to be remembered in the background of conscious-

ness at every stage of religious culture, whatever may be the names and forms adopted for the cultivation of the religious sentiments and the concentration of the mind upon the one. The fulfilment of this culture consists in the perfect realisation of this unity.

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF SPANISH MYSTICISM

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality and a master of several European languages. He is a staunch friend of the Vedanta movement in Europe and is intensely interested in the spiritual and practical side of religious mysticism. His short studies on the saints and mystics of Europe, which we had the pleasure of publishing some time ago, reveal another side of European Christianity scarcely represented by the various churches about which we know much in India. The ensuing essay forms an introduction to the life of Saint Teresa of Jesus, her precursors, and her writings.—The Editors.]

WHAT makes Spanish mystics more living and more important in our day than most of their brothers and sisters of other countries and earlier times in the West, is not so much the greatness of their realisations but their essentially modern and practical outlook and their primary stress on knowledge and experience. This brings them closer to the mental attitude of modern times, and in many ways resembles the attitude of the Indian Sages. Although containing the same lines of thought found in the German and the Netherlandish mysticism of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, Spanish mysticism forms part of that marvellous Iberian culture, which reached its highest development in the 16th century, having its own distinctive traits in the West.

This Golden Age of Spanish Culture, in spite of its being deeply rooted in, and drawing its nourishment from,

the rich soil of the Middle Ages, belongs essentially to modern times in all its characteristics. As opposed to the universalising tendencies of German and Netherlandish mystics, Spanish mysticism followed the general trend of its times and country. And this led away from the universal to the particular, from the impersonal ideal to the personal, from some super-world of metaphysics and metaphysical constructions to the naked facts of physics and this everyday world of ours. At the same time, it never lost sight of the ultimate aim of human life: at-one-ment with God. So it is interesting to note that in the question regarding the working of Divine Grace in the human soul, as to whether Divine Grace opens the doors of the human heart and removes the obstacles barring the path to the higher life without any co-operation on the part of man, or whether it is,

on the contrary, man himself, who, by continued self-effort, chooses to open it and give it to the Divine. Molina and his followers, all of them true representatives of Spanish thought and feeling, took the side of self-effort and the free choice of man, thus giving full weight to individualism in the matter of spiritual striving. The importance of this point can scarcely be realised by Indian readers, as in India spiritual instruction and Sadhana have ever been a matter of individual development, to be settled between the teacher and the pupil according to the latter's stage of spiritual evolution.

In the 15th century Spanish culture in all its temporal, intellectual and spiritual activities, took a decisive turn away from the universal and generalising outlook of the Middle Ages towards individual experience and to science—to a very marked individualism, averse to all that is authoritarian or merely speculative. These—experience and science, or knowledge—are the most characteristic features of full-fledged Spanish mysticism, finding their greatest and most undaunted exponents in St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross. And this is what gives so great and abiding a value to the spiritual teaching of Spanish mystics, when studied as a whole, for our own day—a value which cannot be found in that of the speculative and emotional writings of their German precursors in a chronological sense, however beautiful and elevating they might have been in their poetic haziness and lack of precision.

So we find in Spanish mystics a cautious self-analysis and self-examination and much courageous criticism of visionary states based on a

certain diffidence in believing what has not been tested again and again by oneself and others—which is very different from the childlike and, as it were, blind confidence and from the touching surrender to what their brothers and sisters of other countries happened to take, for the call of the heart and from the indiscriminate faith in the power of the mystical, which we come across in the German and Netherlandish monks and spiritual teachers of the 14th and 15th centuries.

The philosopher will find very little of interest in the writings of the great Spanish mystics. On the other hand, the psychologist and the sincere spiritual aspirant, looking for practical advice and guidance to follow in the steep and perilous ascent, will find very much, no matter to what time and to what country he belongs.

The lofty flights and speculations of an Eckhart cannot really help the ordinary aspirant with limited faculties, however sincere he may be, who tries to take the first insecure and vacillating steps in the spiritual path. The wealth of love and tenderness and the poetic beauty of a Ruysbroeck are not always safe guides among the precipices and deep ravines of personal clinging and untutored emotions, in spite of his repeated warnings. But the Spanish mystic never loses sight of the beginner and of his needs, and rather freely comes down from the heights of beauty and knowledge he himself has attained in order to be a help and a friend to him, who, as yet, cannot grasp the highest truths of spiritual life and spiritual experience.

There is a certain similarity between the Vaishnavite reform movements, the teachings of Ramananda,

Kabir and Guru Nanak, of Mediæval India, and the sudden flowering of mystic knowledge and yearning on Spanish soil in the 16th century. In spite of that, to many Indian readers this shifting of the general mental attitude from the universal to the particular may seem a step backwards. And only when compared with the haziness and lack of practical advice of the Germanic speculative mystics must it be considered as an advance—a decisive step forward. The highest speculative flights and spiritual experiences of man regarding the ultimate nature of

the Divine cannot help another sincere seeker in finding his bearings when the latter, with his limited capacities, wishes to take the very first steps in the path that is to lead him to similar experiences. In their great stress on the purgative way, however, the Spanish mystics fully agree with the East, so that their teachings might almost be summed up in the words of the Bhagavad-Gita: "Triple is the gate of hell, destructive of the Self—lust, anger and greed; therefore one should forsake these three."

## SUCCESS IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARA NANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talk given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

### I

SUCCESS in spiritual life depends on our firmly and steadily holding on to the Divine Ideal. Every one of us must have a central seat of consciousness, a central name to dwell on, and a Holy Form to visualise. In the midst of all the confusion and darkness of the relative plane we must find out a definite course of action, of thinking and of willing, without which no spiritual life is possible. And the person who has no ground to stand on, who has no central point of consciousness, can never have any real faith in himself, and never have any real strength. Always believe firmly: I am a being that can achieve something in the world of the spirit.

Strength is what we want first of all. We are meant for something great, for something nobler and

higher. What is needed is not negative humility, but positive humility, born of real inner strength. People think they are nothing, and nothing they become. People think they are miserable sinners, and sinners they become. People think they are weak, and weak they become. Filth can never be cleaned with filth.

First of all the body must be strong and healthy. A certain amount of physical strength is necessary. There must be some regular physical exercise in the life of every aspirant. Do not take a negative attitude regarding your body. This body of ours is something noble, a temple of the Divine. It is able to achieve something great. Even such physical faith is needed.

This body of ours is like a raft, like a boat, with which one may cross the ocean of relative life. See that it

does not spring a leak, otherwise you are drowned. Make it a point to have regular physical exercise to keep your body in a healthy condition. "May all my limbs, may all my senses, be strong and controlled." "With strong and controlled bodies, with strong and controlled minds, let us pray to the gods." Mental faith is only possible when the mind is strong. Strengthen your mind, strengthen your will. Strength of the mind has to be increased. We need the firm faith that this body of ours is a temple of the Divine, that we are spiritual entities. The weakling has no place at all in spiritual life—neither physically, mentally, nor morally; he has no place in the world of the spirit. "This Atman cannot be realized by the weak," says the Upanishad. If we have strength, then only can we get rid of fear. Drop all fear of others: What will others say of me? If I think this is right, what does it matter what others say or think of me and my doings? Never give in on the vital point. Never lose ground on the vital point. Let us devote every drop of our blood, every heart-beat of our lives, to this cause in some form or other. Live ideal and irreproachable lives as examples to others, not only for your own salvation.

## II

He in whose name we come is always judged according to the standard of our life. Hence we have tremendous responsibility, hence we have to conform to a certain standard. We cannot do what we like. We cannot allow ourselves every freedom. Our responsibility is very great; and we all should be fully conscious of this tremendous responsibility. Let us all

pray for greater strength and greater purity, knowing that our responsibility is so great, and let us walk on with steady steps, having firm faith in ourselves. The conduct and attitude of all aspirants has to be one of reserve, of dignity, and dignified in everything. People must be made to feel once for all with whom they have to deal when they come in touch with you.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "So long as you have this false shame and hatred and fear of society, you cannot make any spiritual progress." And in the Upanishads we find, "We want to attain to that which will make us fearless."

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad there is a passage that says, "Now, Janaka, you have attained to fearlessness." And that fearlessness which is characteristic of the true Sadhaka can come only when we realize the Divine, and the more we approach Him, the more we become fearless. So our whole attitude should be one of responsibility, of dignity, of fearlessness and faith in ourselves as spiritual entities. We are fully responsible for the impression we make on people with our words and actions. That is why we all have to act in such a way that none can reproach us with anything undignified or unworthy of an aspirant. Here the greatest discrimination and discretion must be used by you all.

There is a passage that says, "In enjoyment there is fear, in wealth there is the risk of losing it, in honour that of being dishonoured, in true renunciation alone there is fearlessness." And really speaking, without true renunciation and true dispassion for all things worldly and a worldly

life, as such, no spiritual life is ever possible.

"One who has not desisted from evil, one who has not calmed his mind, one who is not concentrated, can never know the truth, even if he gets knowledge." This is the general rule of the Upanishads. Swami Vivekananda very rightly says, "Luther drove a nail into the coffin of Christianity. He took away religion and gave Christianity morality instead."

We should be pure, because He is pure. We should be clean, because He is clean. And if you really were impure by nature this would never be possible. What is the necessity of our being pure at all? We should be pure, because purity is of the very nature of our soul. This purity is not anything that is adventitious or superimposed on our nature. And unless we become pure, it is not possible for us to see God. Purity must find its physical and its mental expression in and through our whole life. Morals without God have to stop half-way. They can never really go to the extreme, can never really reach the goal.

Purity is part of our nature, therefore we should be moral. What we usually call impurity is only something superimposed, something adventitious, never an integral part of us. Herein lies the whole secret of spiritual life and of salvation.

We want to make that the centre of our consciousness, which is the eternal centre of all. Herein lies the explanation of purity and of being able to lead a perfectly pure and spotless life.

Give the lie to all the Churches, give the lie to the sinner-attitude! "Oh, I, such a miserable sinner, what can I do? I am a sinner!" Give the lie

to that by living an ideal, pure life, a life that is purer and more spotless than that of these sinners clinging to the pillar of their institutional religion, but never doing anything, except crying, "Oh, I am a sinner, I am so weak, what can I do?"

The utilitarian stressing morals for some purely utilitarian reason will never go to the point of leading a perfectly pure, irreproachable life. That is why we have to have morals; but along with morals the foundation of morals, which is wholly lacking in all utilitarian schemes.

### III

The ideals of non-attachment and purity are associated with the Spiritual Being, and thus man comes to realize Divine Consciousness, which is beyond all multiplicity, in fact, beyond any form of being and non-being, Sat and Asat. In all Scriptures we find the conception of freedom associated with the Divine, and freedom can never exist where there is no absolute purity and no absolute non-attachment. Freedom is beyond personal affection and beyond hatred, beyond attraction and beyond aversion. A person who has become free cannot be touched by any of the pairs of opposites, but always rests calmly in his own true being. We all associate Divinity with the ideas of purity, freedom, knowledge, fearlessness, etc. Man aspires to freedom, to fearlessness, to independence, to a state of security and stability. But first we must try to realize this ideal of purity, of sexlessness, of freedom, of fearlessness, in our own life. Only through our own realization of the ideal can we rise to our true human stature. Only thus can the ideal ever become the real. The person who has

no definite idea of the spiritual entity has no foundations for his morals, and if he at all possesses morals, they are, as it were, hanging in the air. There is no rhyme or reason for them in his life. How wonderfully free are the Great Ones! Free from passion, free from attachment, free from fear! We, too, must become free from lust, from sex-consciousness, from anger, greed, jealousy, and all forms of covetousness, subtle and gross. We must rise above the cravings of the flesh, above our man-form or woman-form, to the pure heights of Divine Consciousness. And spiritual life is not merely moral life. It is something more. The great mistake Protestantism in its different forms committed was to put moral life in the place of spiritual life and thus to kill all spirituality. A merely moral or ethical code is insufficient for giving fearlessness and peace to the soul, for lifting it up beyond all temptations and insecurities.

In the lives of the saints the ideals of morals and of spirituality are wonderfully blended, but Protestantism was not prepared to understand and recognise the example of such saintly lives, because it had lost the key to their meaning. A moral man is no spiritual man; but all spiritual men are always moral. This is a great point to note if one really wishes to understand spiritual life. We find in all true saints a wide sympathy that we miss in the utilitarian or the merely moral man.

#### IV

Buddha attained to Nirvana; but he wished to share Nirvana with all others. So his prayer was, "Let all misery come to me. Let all evil, let all troubles of the world come to

me; but let others be free from them!" How he was prepared to save even poor animals with his life! How he saved the sheep which were to be sacrificed by offering his own body to the king! Buddha's heart melted at the sight of the suffering of our dumb brothers. He was one from whom all worldly attachment had passed away, who no longer had any worldly love or any worldly desire, who had given up his wife and child for the sake of the world. This dynamic charity we find in all our saints. When Buddha went to the king to save the sheep, the king was very much astonished at his courage and love for all living beings, was at once converted and he stopped the sacrifice. Buddha's dynamic charity saved the life of all these poor animals. Even before becoming a Buddha, he was fully conscious of his great message. "I want to attain to Immortality and this Immortality I want to share with others."

Such people are never alone, in however great a solitude they may happen to live. One day somebody saw that Mahammed was quite alone. He went and asked him, "Are you alone?" "No, I am not," was the answer. "I am in the company of God."

Once a Bedouin attacked Mahammed while he was alone. "Who is going to save thee now, tell me?" he cried. "God," came quietly the reply. Then the Bedouin's sword fell down from his hand. Mahammed took it up and said, "And who is going to save thee now?" "None!" "Well, then learn the lesson of love and mercy from me."

In all these great souls we witness the expression of a love that is not personal and that we find missing in all others. And this ideal of love is

closely connected with Divine Love.

Sri Chaitanya had a great disciple whom he used to call his brother. His name was Nityananda. He used to go about singing the name of the Lord to the people. Now, in the city of Nadia, where they were working at that time, there were two brothers, great ruffians, who had become dangerous to the householders. In fact, they were rogues of the worst type. They got angry at the singing of the holy name and said, "Why do these fellows come making all this unpleasant noise? We shall teach them a lesson, we shall!" And the ruffians began throwing stones at them. Very soon the blood came trickling down, but Nityananda cried, "Brother, O Brother, it does not matter whether you have hurt me or not. Just take the name of the Lord, do!" Seeing this deep love for all beings the ruffians were fully converted and began to lead saintly lives.

You find this spirit of love and sacrifice in all the Great Ones. Sri Ramakrishna imparted some instructions even on his last day, when he was suffering agonizing pain. A young man had come from some distance to see him and to receive instruction from him, and when Sri Ramakrishna's attendants wanted to prevent him from seeing the Master, Sri Ramakrishna ordered them to let him come in and then gave him the desired instructions in spite of the tremendous suffering this meant to him.

In the Bhagavatam there is a story of a poisonous snake that lived in a pond and which Sri Krishna wanted to punish. He said to it, "Why art thou poisoning the water of this pond with thy venom?" The snake replied

humbly, "Lord, what else can I do? It is Thou who hast endowed me with venom, so I must secrete it. It is not my fault, but Thine."

## V

The spiritual ideal is the surest support and the mainspring of all true morals, ethics, culture, etc. But we should see that we become wide-awake and fully conscious of all our motives and the motive-forces that stand at the back of our thoughts and actions.

I do not know whether you have heard the story of a great Christian monk. It is very instructive. One day one of his brothers had been accused of having shaken hands with a woman, and he was brought before the chapter. He pleaded that she had been a person of good reputation and great purity and devotion. But this great monk who was presiding answered curtly, "Rain, no doubt, is good, and earth is good, yet mingled they form mud, which is not good. Similarly, though the hands of men and women are both good, yet great evil may arise in thought and affection if they are carelessly brought together." This story can teach the aspirant a great lesson. Always learn to go to the very root of a matter and never stop at the first superficial impression an action or a thought gives you. Learn to become fully conscious under all circumstances and in all situations of life, and learn to recognise your own motives mercilessly, but without too much self-condemnation. You should sometimes criticise yourself severely, but this criticism must always be constructive, and never merely destructive, if it is to help you in your spiritual striving and evolution. The

negative 'I am a sinner, I am a sinner' attitude makes you a sinner; and a greater sinner from day to day, and takes you away from all true spirituality.

## VI

Never say you cannot find time for your practices. It is never true. One of our monks is a great expert in gardening and spends much of his time in the garden to grow beautiful flowers to be offered in the Shrine at the time of our different Pujas. When he was one day scolded for not devoting enough time to his spiritual practices, he said that he could not do so as the garden needed so much care that most of his time was taken up with working in it. Then he was told to uproot all those plants which had become old or did not yield good fruits; for then he would be able to find time for both—for his garden and his spiritual practices. No, the thing is this: our mind is so restless, is in such a tension, that we imagine we have no time. We set such a high value on outside cleaning, that we forget to clean the mind properly. Really we can do both.

We should be very careful not to forge new fetters for ourselves or others through passion. There are men and women who go on forging fetters for others and for themselves all their life; and they have to pay heavily in the end. There are men and women whose whole life is spent in making others free from all such fetters, and it is they who find love and bliss and peace and the fulfilment of life. "He who sees the same Atman in himself as well as in all others, he cannot hate anybody." But you may remain indifferent. It is not necessary for you to love everybody in the beginning. "Seeing the one Lord, equally present in all, he does not kill the self by the self and attains to the highest goal." And seeing the one Lord in all means that there cannot be any attraction, nor can there be any aversion, because he who has reached such a state, no longer sees the person, but only the Principle. That is why he is able to remain unaffected and to love all without loving anybody. He has wholly transcended the domain of personal affection, of personal likes and dislikes, and rests in the Atman alone.

## THE STORY OF THE BAHAI MOVEMENT—I

BY AGA SYED IBRAHIM (DARA)

[Students of religious history are aware of the metaphysical blossoming of the Semitic Islam in Persia, producing a vigorous type of spiritual mysticism called Sufism, which has notable resemblances with Vedanta. In Western Asia Iran has been the cradle of religious aspiration and thought for over a couple of millenniums, and we may say that Bahaism, a development of the last century, is one of the latest phases of Iranian religion. This Movement, one of religious and even social and perhaps political importance, has boiled over the boundaries of Persia, gaining ground in Turkey and Africa, and has claimed several adherents from among the rationalists of the Occident as a religion of humanity. Bahaism is not an abrupt emergence; it is the outcome of the theological implications of the shiite Faith which believes in Imams endowed with superhuman wisdom and spiritual perfection and who act as the channel of Divine grace. The last Imam having retired from mortal ken without a successor is supposed to act through intermediaries or 'gates' or Babs in bringing down to man the light of Divine wisdom. Bahaism has its root in this faith as its history reveals. The following interesting sketch of the Movement is by one who is a keen student of Islamic spiritual culture and a Sadhka of Sree Aurobindo's Ashrama.

—The Editors.]

PERSIA can be called the garden of Islamic countries amidst whose fresh running streams and luxuriant orchards poets and mystics are born as naturally as its birds and flowers of so many different shades and hues. These poets have evolved a mystic literature which claims for its sweet-ness and melody an immortal place in the literature of the world. In spite of it all, Persia always had a bigoted and an unrelenting Government dominated by very orthodox views, which always wished to persecute these broad-minded Sufis for transgressing the limits of religious injunctions. Its purest saints have thus been imprisoned, hanged or stoned to death by Government orders.

The last and the greatest of these saints has been Baha Ullah, who, after a long period of imprisonment, suffering and tortures, succeeded in his great mission, and brought about a greater understanding and a freer atmosphere in the land for further

spiritual development. In the following articles we shall give a short account of the life and the struggle of Baha Ullah and of those that were intimately connected with this great world-wide Movement called Bahaism.

Before coming to Baha Ullah it is necessary to mention the great Work of Bab, who opened the door for him by prophesying his coming, and who, by his heroic courage and dauntless will, won for him the most ardent support of thousands of followers even before Baha Ullah proclaimed himself the World Teacher, the long-promised Mehdi of Islam.

### BAB: THE DOOR

The unique story of this wonderful Movement begins from the year 1819 A.D., when a very beautiful son was born to a wool merchant in Sheraz and was named Mirza Ali Mohamed. From the very infancy

there were many signs of greatness in this boy, and there was no doubt that he was a great soul. Unfortunately for him his father died when he was still a child and Ali Mohamed was taken into the family of his maternal uncle who sent him to a school where he did not get more than a very elementary education in Persian. But as he grew up he began to command the love, respect and admiration of everybody who came into touch with him. He was noted for his strong character and indomitable will, harmonised with extreme nobility and gentleness of nature and personal charm. He was remarkably beautiful in person and all the qualities of a great hero and saint began to develop in him naturally. He was never in his whole life accused of any flaw in his character. He proved himself an original thinker and a good inspiring orator who even as a boy could win his argument against a learned Mulla. He got round him a group of followers and his fame spread in the town. In the year 1844 A.D., he gathered a large number of learned people of the town, and some from every class, and declared to them that he had come to the world with a divine message from God to start a new spiritual Movement for unifying all mankind, irrespective of religion, nationality, race or creed, into one great divine Brotherhood. Like all the other prophets he declared that he too had come not to destroy but to fulfil. He insisted on the purification of the existing religions and Islam, so that we should be able to follow their spirit and not the dead letter. He did not believe that the Quoran was final and said that Teachers would come in all ages to the end of time to fill the earth

with God's Light and Truth.<sup>1</sup> He prophesied that a Great Prophet was to come and proclaim Himself a World-Teacher very soon, and that great Light and Truth would come down with him on the earth and that the kingdom of God would be established here, of which Truth, he proclaimed himself to be the Bab, i.e., the gate or the door. He wanted to prepare the country for the acceptance of this great Teacher, Messiah, or the promised Mehdi, for whom the world had been waiting for a thousand years. Bab exhorted his followers not to reject the "Great One" when He appears, for He would be the one "whom God will manifest" and who would "reveal Light in its full Splendour." He prophesied the date of his coming to be nineteen years thence.<sup>2</sup> Later on from his followers he chose eighteen persons who were ready to bear the Truth and sent them to different parts of the country to spread his teachings. They were called the "Letters of the Living," of whom Bab himself was "the Point"—the nineteenth one in number. One of them was a lady who had become famous for her suffering and heroic work, named Kirrat ul Ayn (literally meaning consolation of the eyes). She was the daughter of one of the leading Ulamas of Islam who left her house to be a Babi. She is referred to as the Joan of Arc of the Bahai Movement and well deserves the title.

<sup>1</sup> Bab's own words are—"In the past, whenever there was need, God raised up a Prophet on the earth bearing a book containing Divine Revelation and He will do the same in the future whenever there is need."

<sup>2</sup> The number 19 is regarded as an auspicious number by Babis. For reason see his book "*The Beyan*."

These eighteen, together with a large number of ever-increasing followers, began to spread a vigorous movement in all parts of Persia, and thousands of people became Babis—the followers of Bab. The fanatic Mullas and the orthodox section of the population soon became alarmed at their rapid success and tried to nip it in the bud. They created a strong agitation and appealed to the Shah; and though the Government helped them greatly, they were reluctant to arrest Bab; for his message was of peace and love. Bab soon began to get into trouble. There were plots to get him arrested and tried publicly for heresy. He travelled from place to place and lectured to thousands who gathered to see and hear him in every town. He began to get hundreds of followers in every town he visited.

There is a prophecy in Islam that when the Last Imam, Mehdi, will appear, his appearance will be announced in Mecca on a certain date; and on that date Bab reached Mecca and before a gathering of a hundred thousand pilgrims from all parts of the world, he announced that the "Great One" has come and will reveal Himself to the world in a few years and that he, the Bab, was his forerunner. After a brilliant success at Mecca he returned to Persia and as the opposition against him had grown very strong he stopped at Bushair.

From Bushair he journeyed to Sheraz where a storm had been gathering to burst upon him. He was roughly treated by the opponents. The Mullas insisted on his arrest and he was kept in a remote house under guard with an order to remain within its confines only. Somehow here too,

people got access to him and he sent out a large number of inspired preachers into the country. As his presence in Sheraz was considered always a source of danger, he was asked to go elsewhere and he went to Isfahan where he had a large following. The Governor of the place sent for him and after a conversation openly declared his faith and became his follower. He befriended him in many other ways too, and gave him facilities for declaring and spreading his message. This very soon brought a very severe attack on Bab from the enraged clergy and they wanted to kill him. The Governor hid him in his official quarters and thus saved his life. Shortly after, the friendly Governor died and orders were issued by the Government of Teheran to bring him there. He proceeded to the capital under a strong guard, and through whichever town they passed, crowds gathered to listen to him and people in very large numbers began to accept his teachings. This impressed the guards so much that some of them too, became his followers. The news of the expected arrival of Bab in Teheran created a great sensation there and two formidable groups, one of his supporters and the other of the Mullas and orthodox Muslims, began to form themselves; and there was a fear of a religious uprising. So the Government issued another order that he should not proceed to the city but halt in a town not far from it. From there too he had to be soon removed to a very isolated fortress of Mukku which is in the extreme north-western part of Persia. Throughout his long and tedious journey Bab went on preaching as before and meeting success everywhere. His movement was spreading like wild

fire throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The rapid spread of the movement to so many thousand people in such a short time is itself a great miracle. Professor Browne in one of his articles on the subject says, "I have often heard wonder expressed by the Christian ministers at the extraordinary success of the Bahai missionaries, as contrasted with almost complete failure of their own." "How is it," they say, "that the Christian doctrine, the highest and noblest the world has ever known, though supported by all the resources of the Western civilization, can only count its converts in Mohammedan lands by twos and threes, while Bahaism can reckon them by thousands?"

The reason was that whereas the Christian missionaries try to work for the propagation of religion which is only an outer shell of the Truth long lost to the Church, the Bahais and the Babis were the burning torches that set fire to the hearts wherever they went. They were channels and instruments to the working of a Divine Force that was descending upon the earth at that time. At another place Professor Browne says, "Persian Muslims will tell you often that Babis bewitch or drug their guests so that these, impelled by a fascination that they cannot resist, become similarly affected by what the aforesaid Muslims regard as a strange and incomprehensible madness. Idle and absurd as this belief is, it yet rests on the basis of fact stronger than that which supports the greater part of what they allege concerning this people. The spirit which pervades the Babis is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influ-

ence. It cannot be ignored or disregarded. Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will; but, should that spirit once reveal itself to them, they will experience an emotion which they are not likely to forget."

A strong Movement of persecution was launched by the Government and the Mullas, who constantly excited the ignorant masses against the Babis. Many families of the Babis were ruined and many innocent people suffered great cruelty and martyrdom at the hands of the agitated and the fanatic Mullas. This, far from lessening the vigour of the Babis, filled them with a greater spirit of heroism and zeal, and each vied with the other to do his duty and face the ordeal bravely. Kirrat ul Ayn formed an order of women workers who did splendid work and shared the burden and sufferings of their brothers and husbands. She herself was a poetess, orator and a "heroine of the cause" and a tireless worker whose every word was inspiration itself. She travelled from city to city preaching the new faith and organising its expansion and filling all whom she met with a new spirit. She too was arrested and cruelly tortured and finally put to death. A European writer, Charles Mason Remey, writes about her: "As a woman many decades above her time, her life and example are an inspiration to all, specially to her sisters of the Orient, who, through the cause for which she died, are now being lifted from former condition of ignorance and oppression into one of knowledge and freedom."<sup>18</sup> The tortures to which these women were ex-

<sup>18</sup> From *The Bahai Movement*.

posed can be imagined by the following extract from a speech of Abdul Baha delivered in Paris<sup>4</sup>:—"East has begun to educate its women. Some there are in Persia who have become liberated through his cause (*i.e.*, of Bahaiism) whose cleverness and eloquence the Ulemas cannot refute. Many of them are poets. They are absolutely fearless. The mother-in-law of Sultan ul Shuhoda (King of the Martyrs) was at Isfahan when Bab declared himself. She was in the company of that famous woman, the poet Kirrat ul Ayn, and together they were stoned in the streets. When her son-in-law was imprisoned she was living with her brother, and the day they martyred him she passed her time in prayer, crying, 'O God, help him to remain firm.' This noble woman witnessed his martyrdom and that of her husband's. She passed through great trials. They pillaged her husband's belongings and left her without support. .... The prince, the governor of Isfahan, when he heard that she was at her brother's house, sent for her. She entered his presence alone and hardly had he set his eyes on her when he fell upon her with blows, and kicked her till she became unconscious. Calling to his wife he said, 'Come and see to what a state I have reduced this woman;' then he threw her out into the street. Later when her brother found her she was half-dead. In spite of this, as with a new impulse, she spread the cause everywhere. Her brother said to her, 'Are all these troubles not sufficient for you that you begin again?' 'I cannot help it,' she replied, 'I must go forward; if how-

ever my actions are a source of danger to you, I will go away,'—but he would not allow this and they remained in Isfahan. .... She was one of those women to whom I refer.... She was free and unafraid. Wherever she went she spoke of what she knew.... You in the West can hardly understand the extent of this progress." The ruthless persecution that followed during this period is too cruel to believe. The following passage from "The Bahai Movement"<sup>5</sup> will give an idea of the terrible fanaticism of the orthodox. "Aroused by their priests the fanatical Moslems fell upon the believers in many parts of the land, pillaging and burning homes, torturing and murdering men, women and children. These crimes are too revolting to be mentioned in detail. The heart seems to stand still while listening to the accounts of the marvellous courage and fortitude of even the children, not to mention that of women and men. These souls with the greatest calmness and joy submitted to the most fiendish torture and death, rather than resent or deny their faith, when denial would have saved them. .... Sometimes, the Babi fugitives banded together to resist the attacks of the Moslems, and in some instances they defended themselves bravely only to be slaughtered in the end by the overwhelming numbers of their adversaries. That 'the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church' is again proven to the world.... people who knew little or nothing of the Bab and his teachings, save that a great Prophet's forerunner had come, were confirmed in the faith and went forth to serve and to die when called

<sup>4</sup> From Talks of Abdul Baha given in Paris.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Mason Remey.

upon." It was one of the strictest injunctions of Bab not to show enmity or hatred to the enemy, and to bear all suffering patiently with a pure heart and mind. The Babis did this too well, regarding which the same author writes, "As one listens to the account of the early Babis, of their mission and labour, sufferings and martyrdoms, one sees a wonderful spirit of love of God which actuates them as they respond to the call. One is thrilled as he realises that the days of the vital and the burning faith, such as moved the apostles and the fathers of old, has again come to pass; for this latter day religion is bearing the same kind of spiritual fruit which the religion of the past bore in their earlier days."

From the above account it can be seen clearly that Bab's life was in constant peril. There was no chance of his release. The fanatics were clamouring for his death. He was removed from the fortress of Makku to a still remoter prison in Chih-rik and was closely guarded. The Clergy demanded from the Government a trial and an open examination of his views; and this "investigation" was held in the town of Tabriz by the Governor's order. Bab was brought there before the tribunal as a prisoner, where all manner of insults and indignities were heaped upon him and in the end he was flogged, one of the chief Mullas applying the rods with his own hands. After this Bab was returned to his former prison in Chih-rik. In this prison Bab wrote a number of letters to his friends which were with great difficulty smuggled out. In many places of his letters he alludes to the great Glory of the one whom God will manifest, and who was in the world at that

time but remained unknown to men. He enjoined on his followers to be true to him when he comes. He sent many letters to a person named Mirza Hosain Ali Noor, who later on became known as Baha Ullaha (The Glory of God), whom he had never personally met but with whom he felt a constant inner union. With the last instalment of letters he sent to him his signet ring and his pen. Baha Ullaha at this time was actively working for the same cause. At length the Government saw that no amount of repression could check the Movement. They thought that the only way to strike a fatal blow to it would be to put an end to Bab's life. Accordingly an order for his execution was passed by the Prime Minister and Bab was transferred from the fortress of Chih-rik to the prison of Tabriz. On the 9th July 1850 Bab and his chief disciple were taken to an open square in the town and suspended with ropes against a wall. A company of Armenian Christian soldiers was drawn up and the order of fire was given. A volley of bullets were shot at them and the people saw the two falling on the ground, the rope on the top being cut by bullets. But when the smoke cleared a little more, there was a great consternation on finding that both the prisoners were unhurt and alive. Evidently the aim was too high; perhaps no soldier wished his bullet to kill the saint, so aimed at the rope instead. Bab and his devotees were again suspended as before, but there was such a consternation among the soldiers that the officer-in-charge declined to take any further action. So another batch of native soldiers was ordered out and this time the volley riddled them with

bullets and death was instantaneous.

After the death of these two, several Babis were led to be executed, among whom was Bab's uncle, Haji Mirza Seyyid. The people in the crowd called them mad men. "There upon," writes Professor Browne, "Haji Mulla Ismail turned towards them and said, 'Yes, we are Babis, but mad we are not. By God, O people, it is for your awakening and for your enlightenment that we have foregone life, wealth, wife and child, and have shut our eyes to the world and its citizens, that perchance ye may be warned, and may escape from uncertainty and error, that ye may fall to making enquiry, that ye may recognize the truth as is meet, and that ye may no longer be veiled therefrom.' Then he took off his turban

and said to the executioner, 'Go on with thy work,' and the latter, filled with amazement, struck the fatal blow."<sup>6</sup>

The dead bodies were cast in the moat open to the public view as a warning to all. In the darkness of the night they were removed by some faithful Babis and after being swathed in silk removed from the town disguised as a bale of merchandise. For many years they had to be kept hidden and removed secretly from place to place as occasion and wisdom demanded, till Abdul Baha, the son and the spiritual successor of Baha Ullaha, deposited them in a sarcophagus in the crypt of the shrine of the Bab, in the Holy Land.

<sup>6</sup> From Professor Browne's *A Traveller's Narrative*.

## A VISIT TO HOLLAND

BY SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA

[The following note of Swami Siddheswarananda's short sojourn in Holland is culled from one of his letters written from Paris in May last. The Swami, as our readers are aware, is propagating Vedantic Culture in Europe for over a couple of years. —The Editors.]

I SHALL write about my visit to Holland. I was to have gone this time to Florence as I had written before; but owing to the course of political events, my friends would not permit me to go to Italy, where there is no sympathy for British subjects at this moment. So on the 21st of April I took train, in the morning, for the Hague. Amsterdam Express goes at an enormous speed, but one does not feel it owing to the excellent construction of the carriages. While I was in the restaurant car during the lunch hour, I was reminded, on seeing the waiter, of a story that is now

current. A Dutchman was dining in the restaurant car of a German train, and when the waiter approached him with the usual "Heil Hitler," he made no reply. The waiter was annoyed. "Every time I say 'Heil Hitler' to you," he said, "you must say 'Heil Hitler' to me." "Hitler," replied the Dutchman, "does not mean anything in Holland." "May not now," said the waiter, "but one day you will get our Führer in Holland too." "Perhaps so," rejoined the Dutchman smiling. "We already have your Kaiser!"

I had half a mind to stop at Antwerp and Brussels where there are some people very interested in our literature and who regularly correspond with me, but I did not want to break the joy of a holiday by again thinking of work. One thing we have to learn from the West is how to take a holiday. These people know it as they know the secret of work too. During the time they are at work, they know only that; and when they have their weekends, they get out of their homes only after bundling all their cares and worries safely out of contact with their programme for outing.

As we got off Belgium, or even before that, we found indications of the nature of the land from which Holland derives her name. In French the country is called *Pays Bas*, that is, low country. Extensive flat lands, with only here and there windmills to show any variation in dimension. The country is absolutely two-dimensional. When we crossed the frontier we had to set back our time; for the summer time in Holland begins only on the 15th May, whereas in France it begins on April 8th. As days become longer there is a corresponding adjustment in clock time. In October, again, in France as days become shorter, the time will be changed and we gain one hour as we lost one hour in summer. So when it was twelve noon in France it was only eleven in Holland. I was reminded of this in a curious manner. Seeing my time approaching the arrival hour in the Hague, I began to arrange my things to get out of the train, when I was humorously told by my neighbour that I have to wait one more hour to see the Hague. I fulminated against this indiscretion of

changing hour in each part of Europe according to its own whims and fancies. The European comes to standardise life in India by telling us of our faults—that we have so many differences in dress and food. But what is Europe but an area of multiplicity! And they want to civilise us into unity! Between Paris and the Hague one sees three different currencies, three or four different languages and such vast difference in the customs and manners of the people. Even the lunch and dining hours are different, and it takes time to get habituated to these and to train the appetite according to these customs. The European who tells of our faults forgets for the moment that the area of India is that of the whole of Europe minus Russia; and still at bottom there is greater cultural unity in India than here. In spite of our numerous quarrels between the Hindus and the Mohammedans, our civilisation has not failed; for at the bottom we are all children of Hindustan. European civilisation has not achieved this; for there is no integral unity based on a continuous tradition that is strong enough to avoid total collapse.

By four in the afternoon we arrived at the Hague. Swami Y— along with two devotees had come to meet at the Station. After dinner the Swami took me to the sand dunes that border the beach; and from the dunes we had such a fine view of the sea. Oh! what a relief I felt at the sight of the sea after so many months. Then we came to the world-famous beach of the Hague called the Scheveningen. It is a most luxurious place. I got some idea of the war neurosis of the Dutch. The soldiers were patrolling some portions of the beach and with high-

power projecting lights they were scanning the skies; for the Fuhrer can invade them at any moment. But the Dutch have a nice way of warding off attack. You know that the country has a lower level than the sea in many places and the famous dykes hold water out from the plains that are extensively used for agriculture. Now they have made all the necessary preparations to dynamite the dykes and flood the country; and Hitler will have to swim with his army, unless it be in mid-winter when all water will get congealed. So when the same experiment was tried during the Napoleonic wars, it was a failure, as the Emperor marched on the ice and subdued the country.

In Holland they have monarchy. Queen Wilhelmina is ruling for the last forty years or more. She seems to be the nearest competitor with Queen Victoria in the art of occupying the throne for so many successive years. She is very much revered, and in these days, when the democracies with republican basis have all failed, Holland is imitating the conditions in England in making the throne the centre of stability and continuity of tradition. The Dutch are so sorry that for so many years they had no king. Last year when the princess Juliana was expecting a baby, there was so much excitement as they all expected the birth of an 'Orange,' as the king is called. But the child was a girl. They will have the same excitement this year also as the princess is expecting another baby.

It is curious to observe the change in the atmosphere from France to Holland. Everything becomes different in five hours. The first thing

that impresses one is the extraordinary cleanliness with which everything is kept in Holland. The roads are scrupulously clean; in Paris one gets the impression of being only in Calcutta or Madras. But in Holland we get some idea of European cleanliness as in Switzerland. The country is very very rich. They, with a population of five or six millions, have big colonies full of resources. They rule over fifty million people in East Indies. They are very cultured, all politeness. The Hague is the virtual capital of the country although for name's sake it is Amsterdam. The Queen has to stay because of this in the nominal capital for a week in a year. The palaces, the parliamentary buildings, the international Peace Palace (High Court to judge international problems), are all here, and the famous University of Leyden is only fifteen minutes drive from the Hague.

One Dr.—, a graduate of the Calcutta University is in the Hague. He is a disciple of B—G— and is also devoted to Sri Ramakrishna. He is an extremely enterprising young man with an enormous capacity for different vocations such as painting, photography, etc. He is in Europe for the last fourteen years, and is much liked by all. He has a Clinic called '*Institute Prana*' where he treats people by giving massage. He has wonderful powers of the hand, besides the science he knows. Swami Y— was treated by him for the rheumatism he developed, and now the Swami says that he is completely free from it because of the massage he took from this Doctor. He has one of the finest buildings in the fashionable quarters. It is in his well-furnished

and decorated receiving room that Swami Y— holds his weekly discourses. On the Wednesday I was there, the Swami requested me to give the talk which I did. I find Holland is a very fine field for Vedanta work. For Swami Y— it is specially easier here, as every one knows English. Because of the contact with the East some of them have great reverence for our culture and ideals. And Swami Y— humorously remarked, "Yes you have to pay the price of your conquest. You have taken so much from the East, now you accept the riches of the East in another form—the riches that will stay with you. No Hitler can rob you of it. That is the nemesis of conquest. Rome conquered Greece; but who conquered finally? It was Grecian culture that spread through Rome to Europe."

The method of Swami Y—'s work is quite different from the type we are accustomed to see in the West. He has formed different groups in Zurich, Lausanne, St. Mortiz and Geneva. And you all know that the work in Paris is the direct result of his enterprise. A few friends invite him to a place, he goes there, and in a very informal manner he starts classes and gives interviews. He attracts very sincere souls to him. In Holland, besides the general interest he has created in the group, we find some excellent devotees whose atmosphere makes us feel, even in distant Holland, that we are only in India. I came into contact with four such families and three of them invited us to their homes, where we had tea or dinner. The Swamiji has an invitation to go to Sweden. Perhaps during the summer months, if he does not go to Switzerland, he may go there.

One of the friends of the Swami who attends his class took me to see the Art Gallery. The paintings of Rembrandt, Van Dyke, Ruebens, Potter and a host of others impressed me very much. Some of these paintings of the 17th century are so large in size, that they are more the work of a school of painters than that of a single painter.

One of my dreams in visiting Holland was to see the place where the great philosopher Spinoza lived and worked. Spinoza was a very poor man and he worked his livelihood by cutting glasses for spectacles. He had a patron who allowed him to stay in a small room just under his roof. One can hardly stand up there without the head touching the tiles and in the place where he breathed his last there is not even the space for one to stretch himself normally. There on that solitary spot, hangs a wreath of flowers, the humble homage of some other visitor. I felt sad that I did not bring a wreath to place at the place where he died. But there I stood in deep meditation and paid my homage to that philosopher who is so well known in India. In that room there is minimum furniture—a simple table and a chair—and on the wall he had hung up the motto in Dutch language, which he himself had etched on the brass. It runs thus: ONKUNDE DOET DWALDEN, which means "Ignorance is the cause of error." In another room are preserved the books on Geometry and other subjects which Spinoza used and some manuscript pages from his books. On another table are arranged some sample pages from the books or articles on Him written in the different languages of the world. I searched in vain to find

some in any of the Indian languages; but there was none. Why should India be behind in honouring the memory of this great philosopher! From another side of the room one can see the synagogue which excommunicated Spinoza. There are some pictures on the wall that represent the persecutions that Spinoza had to undergo; one of them represents the philosopher as walking calmly on the road while his co-religionists are throwing stones at him. There is a perfect composure on the face.

On my arrival at the Hague, Swami Y— told me that he and Dr.— desired to perform a *homa* in right Hindu style in the Doctor's house. The Swami asked me to help in the preparations. We had to find many substitutes for *durva*, *bilva*, *sesame*, etc. One of the devotees brought a good number of sandalwood chips. On the previous day I melted a large quantity of good butter and made ghee. A good asbestos sheet was got to raise the *homa-kunda*. So, on the 31st of April, at morning 10 A.M., we did the *homa*. We were both dressed in pure Hindu style with *gerrua* cloths and the Doctor and another Indian student from the Leyden University put on *dhoti*. The Indian student, Pundit P— read and chanted *Purusha Sukta* and other Vedic verses. A few selected friends were invited. The whole atmosphere was made tense by the gravity and meditation of Swami Y—. The ceremonies were gone through exactly in the same manner as we do in India. And once more I got back that spiritual atmosphere of India. These external forms have much value. They are the vehicles through which the culture of India has been preserved; and when

we touch them, once more the whole pageant of Indian History, punctuated by its spiritual heroes, passes before the mind's eye. If to us the *Janmabhoomi*—native land—is more a spiritual concept than a geographical expression, we get a bit of India whenever its spiritual ideals are honoured. And for a time, enveloped in the smoke coming from the *Ahuti* made with the rose leaves dipped in ghee and smell of burnt sandalwood, we were screened out from all that is not India, and through the shortest and speediest means of cultural transport, we were in Bharatavarsha on the curls of smoke coming from the *homa-kunda*. Doctor himself had cooked Indian dishes and we all, along with some Dutch friends, squatted on the floor and ate with our fingers. We told our friends that this ceremony should not be taken as any indication, or any promise, of its introduction into Europe. Far from it. We four Indians met, we felt the desire to be back home, and we felt quite at home when we smelt and felt India through the Ganges water which we all carried and these little artistic ceremonies and our mother-tongue. We four Indians spoke three different mother-tongues. Fortunately we all knew Bengali and we spoke that to our heart's content. I found great difficulty to talk Bengali in the first few days, owing to the percolation of French words. Bengali too, being an acquired language as far as I am concerned, I had for a time to wrestle with French words to express my thoughts.

Swami Y—'s main interest in inviting me to the Hague at this time of the year was to show me the extensive tulip fields in blossom. Last year though he was in Holland, just

at that time when the tulips were to blossom he had come away here. This time he wanted me also to go to him for this purpose, though I told him that more than in any sight-seeing my interest was to share his holy company and see the devotees of the Lord. In a tourist car we went out. There was an excellent sun and for more than an hour we moved about seeing these bulb fields. The colours on the flowers are so variegated that one gets fascinated by the play of colours. Holland is famous for these bulbs. The farmers grow them not for the flowers. These bulbs are exported to all the imaginable horticultural gardens of the world; and during this season, the huge production of flowers except for a few that are brought to other places, are all thrown to the cattle. We were wondering why no essential oil is prepared from these or some colour extracts. So, silently we have thrown a suggestion mentally to any prospective scientist, who wants to complicate life more by fresh discoveries, to find some use for these flowers. Everything is possible. In Germany because of the economic difficulties, of which the outside world hears so little, people are making cloths and many things from extracts of milk. Our *Kamadhenu* would not have even thought of sending out such finished products from her being, as the scientists are able to command from her.

Holland you know is the place for cows. Some say there are more inhabitants of the bovine species in Holland than the human. However, we saw many huge grazing grounds and mother cow was evident everywhere.

Another day we went to Leyden, the University town. First we went

to see the State Museum where the world-famous image of *Prajnaparamita* is preserved. *Prajnaparamita* is the Goddess of wisdom in the Buddhist Pantheon. When we came to the presence of the image, we all felt that a visit to Leyden only to see this would be worth while. It is so charming, imposing and expressive. It gives expression through sculpture to what would take a whole system of philosophy to expound. We saw many statuettes of Buddha, and in one very guarded chamber we found all the jewels and ornaments the Dutch got from India. There were beautiful images of Ganesha and Durga as *Mahishasuramardini*, and in front of all these images I chanted hymns and paid them a type of honour that they do not receive from students of archaeology or history, who come there to conduct research work. We then went to the museum. One section of the museum is worked by Mr. B—, a student of the Swami. He works on the section devoted to the collection of molluscs. He opened many cases and showed us the evolution of the molluscs. Our conch was there; with many of its ancestors, of thousands of years of antiquity. Mr. B— takes such an interest in his subject that I envied the students that will come to this section to study. He makes every description living. We saw the skeletons of some antediluvian elephants.

Pundit P—, of whom I have already spoken, besides being a student of archaeology at the Leyden University, has also a temporary appointment there as a professor of Hindustani and Bengali literatures. Because of Punditji we were able to see the very old university. It is one of the oldest in Europe. Amongst the

other old ones are the one at Prague and the one in Paris. We went and saw the Senate House. It is a very very old convent. As we climb the staircase, we pass through centuries. On the walls we find pencil sketches made by students, perhaps as they stood waiting for their turn to be called before the Board of Examiners. One represents a student explaining his thesis; and it must have been so dry or the professor so stupid, that he goes into deep sleep and the student by the strength of his voice attempts to rouse the professor. This must have been centuries old. There is a waiting room and on the time-worn table we find all kinds of penknife cuts. All the marks on the walls are kept as they were inscribed hundreds of years back. This sense of respect for antiquity we have to cultivate in India. Last year we had some nice fun when Swami Y— was here. He was disappointed with Paris. "What is this, Brother," he said, "your Paris buildings are not at all whitewashed." Then I pointed out to him how these buildings were so very old, and that for preserving the atmosphere of the place no modernism was permitted to spoil the effect which was transmitted through ages. The historic sense is so strong in the people here that we can see things kept in the same way as it happened centuries ago. I remember a visit we paid to the historic temples of Belur and Halebid in Mysore in 1926. There, in Halebid, we were in some places shocked by the effect of whitewash seen on the walls that contained beautiful images. Now, thanks to the Monuments Preservation Act of Lord Curzon, no such vandalism is permitted.

A place like the university quarters at Leyden takes you back to the historic past. Even the signboards with "apartments are to let," are still done in Latin. They say—I do not know how far true—that throughout Europe it is only in Leyden you see this vestige of the middle ages. We saw round the Senate Hall, and the museum of the university. I hope our Indian universities and colleges will have the museums where one can see the history of the institution through the documents preserved from long time. In the museum they have hung up a bust, enlargement photo, of the Princess Juliana, daughter of the Queen. She worked like any ordinary student in the university and took her doctorate in law a few years back. Many stories of her democratic temperament are current in Leyden. Her mother, the Queen, preserves the old tradition. But the princess is very modern. She used to go to the college sometimes in ordinary street cars or tram cars as we saw there. She was, so the story goes, often late in catching the tram. One day, seeing her coming in hurry to catch a car that was just starting, the conductor took pity on the unknown student, made some concession and stopped to pick her up. But as this was repeated some other days also the conductor, it is said, told her. "Mademoiselle, this will be the last occasion I can show mercy. You must come in time." Long afterwards he came to know that he was addressing the heir to the throne.

The day before I left we went to Amsterdam. It is some fifty miles off from the Hague. There is now a new autostrade between the Hague and the Capital. I loved the visit more for the journey in the car. The

road is so fine that our car went at an ordinary speed of 130 kilometres per hour, *i.e.*, some hundred miles per hour. I, who am so nervous in Paris, or even anywhere else, if the car speeds above forty miles, felt so poised that I could have allowed even a higher speed. On a very flat road, with fine pieces of gardens, with green verdure in the middle to separate the two courses of traffic, with two demarcated sections even on your own side for cars to 'double up,' *i.e.*, to overtake another, there is no chance to have any nervousness. It was raining at Amsterdam and I felt very dull. We went only to see the picture galleries where I was so an-

xious to see the engravings of Rembrandt. We saw them and many other sections of paintings and sculpture and then saw in detail the colonial museum. That impressed me very much. One can have some very definite ideas of the Dutch in East Indies.

Holland is the country where bicycle is largely used. The country is very flat and this perhaps is the cause. Sometimes when the traffic is regulated at road crossings, one finds three hundred or four hundred cycles waiting to get the permission from the policeman directing the traffic, to proceed. . . .

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

- (1) *Talks with Swami Vivekananda*;  
 (2) *Practical Vedanta*; (3) *The Last Message of Sri Krishna: Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora Himalayas*. Price, Rs. 1-12-0, As. 10 and Rs. 2-8-0 respectively.

The first of these contains a series of inspiring conversations that Swami Vivekananda held with an intimate disciple of his. In these conversations the Swami is seen at his best. They give his views on a variety of themes, both spiritual and secular, in a luminous and pointed manner. Several points of genuine interest to a real patriot as well as a spiritual aspirant are beautifully explained here. The last book is the 11th Canto of *Srimad Bhagavata* with the Sanskrit text, English translation and brief notes.

It may be noted that none of these books are new in their contents. They are however new in their form and the titles they bear. In this world of relativity the form is as important as the spirit—sometimes perhaps more. A good dish served in an unclean manner becomes repulsive, while even an indifferentely prepared dish served in the proper way may become attractive. In the same way a good book

loses all its charm when it is printed and got up badly, while sometimes even a book of inferior worth appears charming when its form is attractive. In the case of the books under review, both form and matter come to an equally high standard of excellence. Though they are reprints, it will be advantageous even for those who possess their earlier editions, to go in for them; for they come to the highest standard of excellence in the art of book-making, and the inspiring messages they convey, will be found all the more inspiring in the setting of rare beauty that the book-maker's art has given them.—S.T.

**Cultural Movements in Modern India:**  
*By Ram Prasad Pandey, M.A., Published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publisher, Agra. Pages 122. Price, Re 1.*

Mr. Pandey attempts in five chapters a short history of the Cultural Movements of India that originated in the last century. In these chapters, after giving an account of the historical origin of Indian civilization, he passes under review in a kaleidoscopic manner the various religious revivals such as Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Vedanta Society, Satsang and Educational, Literary

and Political movements and concludes with 'a vision of the future.' The book deserves attention in so far as hardly any other attempt has as yet been made in this direction by any one else. But an endeavour to assess contemporary history is beset with many difficulties; it is nearly impossible that our estimate will be either proportionate or detached. In the dust-storm of the political struggle events can hardly be seen in their proper perspective, everything looking blurred and shadowy. This is not, therefore, the most convenient time for unbiassed chronicling. In spite of these handicaps Mr. Pandeya has succeeded to a large extent in taking an impersonal view of the data, and his small brochure will serve not only as an introductory book for the college students, for whom it is intended, but will be an interesting and instructive study to the general public as well. The book instils in us the hope that India is not yet a subject for post-mortem analysis; she lives and grows in dynamism and power. While thus recognising the value of the work we should not fail to call attention to some inaccuracies in the book which could have been easily avoided by careful revision in the light of books deemed authoritative on the subjects concerned. To give a few instances, Sri Ramakrishna was born in 1836 and not 1834 as given in the book; the statement that the Brahman lady instructed Sri Ramakrishna in monistic doctrines of Vedanta is also not correct. The Brahman lady instructed him only in Tantric practices. The statements that Sri Ramakrishna lived and behaved for years as Christian and

Mohammedan also cannot be authentically documented. He took only three days to complete his Islamic Sadhana and he had to make no effort for Christian realisation which dawned upon him on seeing a picture of the Madonna and the child. That Swami Vivekananda was taken to Sri Ramakrishna by an uncle is an erroneous statement, the truth being that he was advised to visit Sri Ramakrishna by Ram Chandra Datta who was a cousin.

In spite of these inaccuracies as to the details, in general outline the book is well written and serviceable.

It has an index of proper names appearing under the sub-heading 'Principal Institutions.'—P.C.

*Modern India: By Swami Vivekananda. Published by Adyaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 64. Price as. 6.*

The present treatise is the third edition of the translation of Swami Vivekananda's famous book, *Vartaman Bharat* in Bengali. The book is one of the most striking works of Swami Vivekananda. For, it is both a reminiscence and a prophecy; a guidance for the future in the light of old achievements and past experiences. Those of our national workers who draw their inspirations from the Third International will do well to go through these pages and then and then only will they be able to achieve successfully the hopes and aspirations engendered in them by exotic influences, in a way that is best suited to the genius of the race. Otherwise there will be friction and dissensions and so much labour lost. The book will be helpful in the real understanding of India.—P.C.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Brindaban, Dt., Muttra. for the year 1938.

The above Sevashram "possesses the only large indoor Hospital at Brindaban, the indoor Hospital conducted by the District Board and Municipality being intended only for a few police cases." In the indoor department there were 24 beds altogether; and 346 cases were treated in 1938 of which 47 were surgical cases. The outdoor depart-

ment treated 15,810 new cases and 26,339 repeated cases, the total number of surgical cases being 583. About 23 poor invalids and helpless ladies also received monthly outdoor relief in kind or cash. The total receipts and disbursements during the year under review were Rs. 8,813-11-0 and Rs. 7,988-10-3 respectively. Thus the balance left was Rs. 815-1-6. The income derived from the permanent fund of the Sevashram is not sufficient to carry on the present work even for three months. For the ba-

lance of the recurring expenditure the management has to depend upon public contributions. Again, a nursing room, a permanent kitchen, an outdoor dispensary building and an embankment and landing Ghat are to be constructed as early as possible for more efficient service. An estimated amount of Rs. 35,000 will be required to complete this project.

**The Report of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Charitable Dispensary,**

Bhubaneswar for 1937-38.

This is a branch activity of the Bhubaneswar Centre. "In 1937 and 1938 the number of cases treated were 40,689 and 35,607 with an average daily attendance of 106 and 98.36 respectively." In addition to medicines, poor patients were supplied with diet, cloth, warm clothings and pecuniary help according to their dire necessities. In urgent cases patients were visited in their own houses. The Opening Balance for the year 1937 was Rs. 497-3-9 only and the total receipts including the interests from the permanent fund of Rs. 4000 during the two years under review was Rs. 719-0-3 and the total expenditure amounted to Rs. 776-9-6 leaving a balance of Rs. 439-10-6 only. The present building is inadequate for expanding the work of the Dispensary. Additions are, therefore, urgent for which an estimated cost of Rs. 4000 is to be contributed by the generous and sympathetic public. The centre also undertook Flood Relief work at Delang in 1937 and Cyclone Relief work at Ranibha in 1938.

**Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Charitable Hospital Rangoon, for the year 1938.**

During the year under report, the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Rangoon, attended to 2,58,824 cases in the outdoor including men, women and children; of these 98,190 were new cases. The indoor department treated 4,701 cases, of which 3,649 were men, 932 women and 120 children. The average daily attendance of the outdoor was 696 and that of the indoor 138. The death rate for the year was only 6.25 per cent. During the year 1938 total receipts were Rs. 68,380-2-9 and disbursements Rs. 60,864-14-6. This leaves a balance of

Rs. 7,515-4-3 for the following year. This Sevashram is one of the largest philanthropic centres of the Mission, and in Burma there are very few hospitals so well equipped and efficiently managed. Yet there is enough scope for it to expand. For instance an X-ray building is a real need for which an amount of Rs. 18000 is in immediate need. Funds are also needed for constructing a separate kitchen for patients, a steam laundry and more buildings to accommodate workers.

**Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Free**

**Tuberculosis Clinic, Daryggang,**

**Delhi, For the year 1936 and 1937**

This branch of the activity of the Ramakrishna Mission Centre of Delhi was started in 1933 with a view to render effective scientific service in combating tuberculosis through an outdoor Clinic managed by medical experts in co-operation with lay members. During the year 1936 the total attendance of the patients was 6934 and in 1937, 11,363. The report reveals that in 1936, 192 Hindus, 184 Muslims and 7 others (total 383) and in 1937, 190 Hindus, 237 Muslims and 5 others (total 432) were the new cases. Out of 815 patients treated 417 were tubercular, of which 365 were pulmonary and 52 non-pulmonary cases; and the treatment of pulmonary cases resulted in positive improvement in respect of 44 per cent. of the cases in 1936 and 57 per cent. of the cases in 1937. X-ray examinations were 489, laboratory examinations 494 and operations 721. The Balance Sheet shows that the receipts and disbursements were Rs. 4,513-14-0 and Rs. 3,220-8-0 in 1936, and Rs. 6,016-8-3 and Rs. 5,409-7-0 in 1937, respectively. The spread of the disease is so wide that in spite of the existence of another Municipal Clinic the present one is only progressing in its scope of service. The financial position of the Clinic has been considerably improved owing to the receipt of the grant from Delhi and New Delhi Municipal Committees. The needs of the institution are still not at all satisfactorily met. Funds are to be supplied for the housing of the Clinic in a building of its own, for providing hospital accommodation in addition to the outdoor Clinic and also for providing adequate equipment for operations.

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GENEROSITY

Generosity is more divine than liberality. A multi-millionaire may be very liberal in contributing princely sums towards philanthropic concerns with least personal inconvenience; but an indigent peasant does an act of generosity when he feeds a starving beggar with his hard-earned meal, and himself goes hungry. Kshemendra, a Kashmerian poet of the 11th century, describes the Indian conception of generosity as follows:

यदेव रागसर्वत्वं पुंसां जीवितजीवितप् । तदेवस्तीतिसत्वानां त्यागे दृणलवायते ॥  
 ते जयन्ति जगत्यस्मिन् पुण्यचन्दनगादयाः । छेदनिर्विषदहेऽपि ये परायेषु निर्वयाः ॥  
 अमन्दानन्दसुहृदे हरिचन्दनशंतलाः । हरन्ति सन्तः सन्तापं दक्षिणाः पवना इव ॥  
 धन्यस्य यात्ययं कायः परोपकृतये क्षतिप् । क्षणक्षयीह देहोऽयं रक्षयमाणोऽपि नाशयः ॥  
 प्रायेण स्वसुखान्वेषी परार्थविमुखो जनः । स्वजीविते विनिस्तेहः त्यागः सत्त्वमयाः मनाश् ॥  
 कृतः सुवृत्तः सरलः पराये मधुराशयः । सहते दुःखसम्बिडामिक्षुकाण्ड इवोन्नतः ॥  
 अहो महामतेरस्य करुणाक्रोमलं मनः । प्राप्तं परार्थपीडासु वज्रादपि कठोरताप् ॥  
 सागरादपि गम्भीरं मेरोरपि समुन्नतप् । त्रिदिवादपि साश्रयमहो वृत्तं महात्मनाश् ॥

A thing which is to the common man the very life of his life—that very thing the man of consummate goodness sacrifices for the benefit of others, as if it were mere straw, without any regret. All glory to those martyrs who are not sensible to the least pain even when they are hacked, bruised and burned for the good of others, even as a holy Sandalwood tree which only gives out fragrance when cut, abraded and thrown into fire. Indeed the very presence of those great ones gladdens others as the anointing with superior Sandal paste; their hearts brim over with the delight of active friendliness; they chase away the grief of others in just the same manner as the southerly wind soothes the heated limbs of man. The body of such a worthy person wears away in constant altruistic service. Alas! the ephemeral body we have in this world is not imperishable, with however much care we may protect it. Generally those who are on the look-out for their own personal pleasures are seldom found to be inclined to do good to others; the generosity of those who are good to the core may be characterised as complete absence of clinging to their own lives. The exalted one, noble in conduct and soft and sweet at heart towards all, undergoes pain and oppression just as a soft, round, sugar-cane cut out, and which yields sweet juice. Behold, such a large-hearted man—his soft mind soaked in the milk of kindness! Such a mind turns imperviously hard as a diamond when the person is subjected to persecution for the weal of others. More profound than the ocean, more lofty than the Mount Meru, more astounding than all that one witnesses in the heaven, is, indeed, the behaviour of that soul whose love encompasses all.

—Avadanakalpalata.

## **PRIVATE MORALITY AND CIVIC DUTY**

MANKIND has been having a prolonged schooling on this planet, extending over ages. Consequently to-day it is the possessor of a grand civilisation and a subtle culture. The wealth of wisdom acquired after age-long experiment, error and amendment passes on as the property of the many from the hands of smaller groups. Culture cannot be democratised overnight, because like the ingredients that form the crystal or the pearl that is produced in the oyster shell, a subtle internal change alone can engender the refined quality of culture. None can jump into maturity—it is not like disastrously jumping into conclusions. Growth has its own laws, and they require to be satisfied before it can take place. Culture, like water, gravitates from higher to lower levels by percolation, creating its pre-conditions by proximity. It cannot be had in a trice. No one can, by striking a bargain, exchange a disorderly, coarse, dull mind for a co-ordinated, well-furnished, alert one. One gets true culture only by submitting to healthy influences internal and external in all the relations of life. The individual and the society are reciprocals; influence issuing from the one permeates the other, and returns back to the source wherefrom it started. If habit is second nature, nature is only inalienable habit. Nature plays large and nurture larger part in raising the fruits of culture.

The points on which civilisation and culture contact life are many. We shall essay below to consider some aspects of civilisation known ordinarily as decencies of social life,

envisioned under moral character. At a time when the political and social fate of India is in the focal point, and the deplorable lack of discipline is trounced by the experienced leaders, it may be fitting to note, both from the viewpoint of private morality and civic duty, some of the neglected points of decency in life which, though apparently commonplace, lead to the impairment of important sides of a man's character by infraction.

No nation could afford to be so proudly narrow as to believe that culture and civilisation are the prerogative of a particular age or a particular country, although it might be conceded necessarily that they do not spread simultaneously over any society in its entirety. One has also to recognise that there are different types and forms of culture; but everywhere there is a norm of behaviour and a standard of decency according to each. It is often repeated by thoughtful men that culture is a matter of the mind. Civilisation cannot be reckoned merely in terms of the concrete products of crafts and technique. The cultural forms of one time may not have the same value at another; yet so long as one particular tradition is alive they have great influence in elevating a people.

Human mind has a potentiality for order. Knowledge is but stamping of this quality of order on external Nature; that is what classification and mutual association do in any branch of learning. Order in outlook is the major part of morality; order in behaviour is the best part of

civic behaviour. Every moment we are in need of our fellow-beings; mutual intercourse is the *sine qua non* of social life. On such occasions of contact there are accepted ways in which things are to be done and others in which things are not to be done. They are for the most part taken for granted without questioning at every step. Perhaps sometimes on scrutiny they may prove to be meaningless. An imperceptible mandate issuing from the social group to which one belongs easily rules out the objection that may lurk in the mind of some individuals. Rules of mannerly behaviour are the unwritten laws of any society. Though they may appear negligible in certain cases, disregard of conventions often would lead to barbarous consequences. A certain English writer remarked once, Habit or ritual is the mistress of men sane. Social rules have a sanctity which prevents collapse of manhood. Virtue is the offspring of good conduct—*acharaprabhavo dharmah*,—says the *Mahabharata*. Doubtless laws are for men and men are not for laws. Conventions have not even the force of law; but disregard of conventionally fixed ways of conduct soon threatens to be a moral danger. One may not get any answer when the grounds of such conventions are questioned, beyond the impersonal imperative which they carry. But to sustain wholesome human relations their value is immense. We shall specifically consider some of them immediately.

In all societies where personality or status plays an important part there is a high standard of courtesy. Courtesy is the inseparable companion of virtue. It grows within the hedge of healthy social conventions

jealously guarded in every stable society like tribal honour. The desire to please others by anticipating their wants and wishes and studiously avoiding all that would give them pain constitute the essence of polite behaviour. This is visible in the address and manners of a person. At every step, a dignified complacence and kindness render his behaviour attractive to everyone. It comes almost natural to every moral and refined person and sets off his character from that of the rest. It has special value in one's civic life. Even shining inner virtues will not look beautiful unless they are embellished with decency and decorum. Rightly has Tennyson remarked:

The greater man, the greater courtesy...  
For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.

And according to Goethe, politeness is not merely obliging attention. "There is a politeness," said he, "of the heart which is akin to love. It gives the most agreeable politeness of outward conduct." Often expressions of thanks which people freely distribute are without this heart's politeness. The sagely author of *Samkshepasariraka*, Sarvajnatman, remarked in one place: To foster a sense of obligation is the sign of kindliness—*etad eva hi dayalu-lakshanam yad vineyajana-buddhi-vardhanam*. According to situation, by observation, one may find out the conduct most suitable to the expression of such polite inner attitude. In any society one may easily tag on a catalogue of such virtues.

For instance, in Western countries there are certain unwritten social rules which everyone who has respect for good manners will not violate. A

gentleman speaks low. As a rule of conversation he will not gesticulate or raise his voice in drawing-rooms or in the streets even when he is justly excited. It will be always considered an affront to refined behaviour if an impulsive man gives unrestrained expression to all his moods in brawling strong language. It is the power of convention that guards one against several indecencies that are liable to arise in life—sharp contradiction, hoarse laughter and blustering and thumping parlour eloquence. One is not to announce his indisposition or uneasiness in the company of those who call on him. Even in a society where smoking is no taboo smoke-soddenness is never respected and no well-bred person would stoop to wound the susceptibilities of his neighbour by rude addiction to such a habit. More goes to the making of a fine gentleman than clothes. Newman's description of a gentleman is no doubt a sermon to bring home to all that it is not the gay coat that makes the gentleman. The influence of conventions in breeding true gentlemanliness is well recognised. It is the power of conventions that guard against such indecencies as noted above. What lies at the bottom of such conventions is respect for the personality of others, their body as well as soul. *Bhagavata*, IV: 3.22 says that the rule of going forth to meet, modest behaviour and salutation is observed by intelligent people directed towards the Divinity in man. As in any other matter, herein the spiritual view, which Hindus take even in matters of ordinary conventional behaviour, is evident. Where there is this respect, human relation will be sound and dignified. No gentleman, as an English moralist

observed, would "like to be hugged and slobbered over, or even perpetually thumped over the back, or prodded in the ribs, by his 'comrade' and still less the comrade performing all necessary natural functions in his presence." Respect and certain inviolable privacy supply the foundation for comradeship. That beautiful and salutary trait of modesty is nothing but the proper respect for the bodily presence of another. Sister Nivedita states in one of her writings, although there is only one 'you' in English to represent the different shades denoted by the various words in Latin or Indian languages denoting the second person singular or plural, the very tone will carry the sense which the speaker wants, if his mind is attuned to the sentiment required to be expressed.

Education begins a gentleman. conversation completes him—says the proverb. But few people are patient enough to lend ear to his interlocutor. The Persian writer Sadi observes with his usual vivacity: "A speech, O wiseacre, has a beginning and an end; bring not one speech into the middle of another. A man of judgment, discretion and prudence delivers not his speech till he finds an interval of silence. A prudent man will not obtrude his answer till he has the question stated to him in form." This reverence for form, proper in every activity of life, demands and justifies an intense application to the general details of life; it may not be significant to hasty eyes. But susceptibility to a feeling of its need is the essence of refinement.

They are important equally to the individual and the society to which he is bound. A man has to see that those to whom he comes nearest are

made happy. Business cannot be made an excuse to decline offices of humanity. One has to give what life with others may hourly demand. A man who has no humility, no reverence, no deference and no respect and who is not capable of true admiration is miles away from religion, and his social conduct is seldom free from blemishes. The late Professor McDougall has rightly warned, "Fussing and fuming irritate others by infection, even when our anger is not directed towards them; shun the company of such irritable and irritating people..... To clever, quick-brained persons the stupidity of other persons is apt to be irritating. Let them remind themselves on every such occasion that the other fellow's stupidity is not his fault, but rather his misfortune; and that their own quick cleverness is a gift from the gods which entitles them to no exceptions, but rather lays special obligations upon them—obligations of helpfulness, of tolerance and of service."

Works of great geniuses like Valmiki and Vyasa, Kalidasa and Shakespeare, Manu and other sages, reveal at every step how polite behaviour is to be cultivated in every situation. They have characterised great heroes in such a way that their reactions to situations impress us at once; at the same time sufficient allowance is made to errors in order that they may not be completely foreign to our nature. There are several places where Kalidasa has thrown beautiful hints of polite behaviour that is to be adhered to at court, in company of friends, in the presence of ascetics, in approaching hermitages and in meeting one's relations. His characterisation of King Dilipa, as

one in whom there was knowledge conjoined to modest silence, power graced by forbearance, charity free from self-adulation—is on the lips of every student. Magha, another well-known poet of the classical period, gives a beautiful picture how Sri Krishna met Yudhishthira and others on the eve of the great sacrifice (*Sisupalavadha* cantos XIII and XIV). There politeness, courtesy, affability and modesty are depicted in a highly poetic and impressive manner. In XIII: 68, he says that Sri Krishna, who was so much respected by the whole tribe, questioned the welfare of all, even that of a boy, all of whom among his innumerable kinsmen he distinctly remembered. In II:11, the poet puts in the mouth of Krishna these words: I am not sorry that the wicked Chaidya has offended me; I am deeply grieved that he harasses others.

There are hundreds of customs in domestic relations and one's daily behaviour which are calculated to refine our character. A metrical composition which depicts a hundred traits of a fool, *Murkhasataka*, says among others: A fool is idle even when he has capacity; he boasts in the company of the wise and learned; he desires to do big things beyond his power; he hastens to interpret without study; he pines over what is already given in gift; he is ready with unsolicited eloquence; he is mute when called upon to speak; he falls out when the gain is to be shared; he is full of anger at dinner; he gloats over wounding words; he seeks medicine in perfect health; he is inflated with flattery; he hits at another's heart with smiling words; though wedded to poverty he delights only in gossip; he boasts over the

pedigree without any virtue of his own; he attempts music though he has only a grating voice; he praises persons whose wickedness is patent to all; he slinks away from an assembly before its dispersal; he goes on errand but forgets the message; he praises his own taste of the food when the guests are many; he minimises food to get adulation; he interlopes when two persons speak; he worms into others' secret and broadcasts it; he stands security for persons unknown only for securing praise; he is jealous of a wholesome adviser; he is anxious to teach but is unfit for the purpose; he is shameless in wickedness; and he drowns what he wants to utter by foolish laughter.

A detractor is his own foe and the world's enemy. One may embroider his conversations and make them interesting to others by revealing all and more than what he knows of others' affairs and their personalities. Ultimately he plays a losing game; he hurts and estranges his own friends. A fool's tongue is long enough to cut his throat, as the proverb goes. Excessive loquacity is detrimental to one's esteem. He who distributes blame freely and speaks freely of himself cannot be liked by others and is a failure in team work. He lays down laws for others and creates only opposition. "The brutal mania for leading," said Swami

Vivekananda, "has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life. Take care especially of that" (Comp. W. S. V. Vol. V. p. 29).

Manu commands: One should not enter into altercation with his parents, relations and servants (IV: 180). One who salutes habitually and respectfully approaches experienced elders promotes his life, wisdom, honour and strength (II: 112). Do not be ready with a reply uninterrogated. Deaf ear to unjust enquiries (II: 110). Chewing the thumb and dirtiness are ruinous (IV: 71). One should not make over a gift with levity. In one place Valmiki says that *mangala* means noble conduct. Even according to rhetoricians of old one of the purposes of poetry was to familiarise with polite and moral behaviour.

We have made a rapid survey of the importance of social conventions, the moral attitude they foster and their effect in social life. The foundation of this essential, universal and imperative demand of social and individual virtues lies in the rational man's command over himself and his moods. The whole range of polite behaviour can be reduced conveniently to self-restraint and self-control which religion demands as soon as one makes up his mind to tread its path.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DISCIPLE

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.

—The Editors.]

It was morning. The Holy Mother was preparing fruits for worship. The disciple was reading to her a letter written by a devotee. He wrote in a strain as though he were piqued with God. The Mother said in reply, "The Master used to say, 'Sages like Suka and Vyasa were at best ants.' God has this infinite creation. If you do not pray to God what does it matter to Him? There are many many people who do not even think of God. If you do not call on God, it is your misfortune. Such is the Divine Maya. He has thus made people forgetful of Him. He feels, 'They are quite all right, let them be'."

Disciple: Mother, it is not that people, like the writer of this letter, do not want to see God; otherwise, why should such a question arise in their mind at all? The thing is that they feel greatly hurt that God whom they like to feel as their very "own" moves away from them. Buddha, Chaitanya, Jesus Christ and others like them, did so much for their devotees in order to insure their welfare.

Mother: That was also the attitude of our Master. It is not possible for me always to recollect all the devotees. I say to the Master, "O

Lord, please bless all, wherever they may be. I cannot remember everyone." And see, it is He who is doing everything. Otherwise, why should so many people come?

Disciple: That is true indeed. It is rather easy for men to believe Kali, Durga and other deities to be God, but is it easy to accept a man as God?

Mother: That depends upon His grace.

One day, later on, a devotee arrived. The disciple said to the Mother, "Mother, it is this devotee who wrote you that letter." The Mother said, "Is it so? I see he is a good boy." Then she said to the devotee, "You see, it is the nature of the water to flow downwards, but the sun's rays lift it up towards the sky; likewise it is the very nature of mind to go to lower things, to objects of enjoyment, but the grace of God can make such minds go towards higher objects."

It was about half past ten in the morning. A household devotee arrived and saluted the Mother. "Mother," said he, "Why do I not see the Master?" The Mother said, "Continue in your prayer, everything will happen in time. For how many cycles did the Munis and Rishis

of old practise austerities to realize God but did not succeed, and do you believe you will attain God in a flash? If not in this life, you will attain Him in the next. If not in the next, it will be after that. Is it so easy to realize God? But this time the Master has shown an easy path; therefore it will be possible for all to realize God."

After the devotee had left her, the Mother said, "He is so deeply engrossed in worldliness. He is the father of scores of children and still says, 'Why do I not see the Master?' Many women used to come to the Master. They would say to him, 'Why can't we concentrate our mind upon God? Why can't we steady our mind?' and things like that. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell them, 'You still smell of the lying-in room. First get rid of that smell. Why are you so worried about God-realization now? Everything will happen in course of time. In this life we have this meeting with one another. In the next we shall again meet and then you will attain to your goal.' It is easy to see a person as long as he lives in the body. I am now living here, so one can see me by merely coming here. How few have the good fortune to see the Master now with their physical eyes! Vijaya Goswami had seen the Master at Dacca. He felt his body. At that the Master said, 'That my soul goes out is not good; perhaps this body will not last for many more days'.

"Can you tell me who has seen God? He made Naren attain God-realization. Suka, Vyasa, and Shiva are big ants at the most. One may see a vision in dream but to see God in physical form is a matter of rare fortune. ....

(Excitedly) "Why can't one meditate if he has a pure mind? Why should he not be able to see God? When a pure soul performs Japam, he feels as if the holy name bubbles up spontaneously from within himself. He does not make an effort to repeat the name. One should practise Japam and meditation at regular times giving up idleness. One day while living at Dakshineswar I felt indisposed and left the bed rather late through sheer laziness. At that time I used to get up at three o'clock in the morning. The next day I woke up still later. Gradually I found that I did not feel inclined to get up early at all. Then I said to myself, 'Ah, here I have fallen a victim to idleness.' Thereupon I began to force myself to get up early. Gradually I got back my former habit. In such matters one should keep up the practice by one's grit.

"Austerities, worship, pilgrimage, the earning of money—all these one should do in the younger days. You see, even I have visited so many places at Benares and Brindavan on foot, but now I need a palanquin to go even a few feet. I lean upon others. In old age the body becomes filled with phlegm. It does not possess any strength. The mind loses its vigour. Is it possible to do anything at that time? It is quite right that the young Sannyasins of our Math have been directing their mind to God at an early age. This is the right time for them to do so. (To the disciple) My child, practise austerities and worship from right now. Will these things be possible later on? Whatever you want to achieve, this is the right time."

Disciple: Lucky indeed are those who receive your blessings now.

What will they do who will come later on?

Mother: What do you mean? Do you mean to say they will not succeed? God exists always everywhere. The Master is always there. They will succeed through His grace. Are not people of other countries making spiritual progress?

Disciple: The mind feels longing when it knows that it is loved; but do you really love us?

Mother: Do I not love you? I love him who does even a little for me, and you are doing so much. Whenever I touch a thing at home, I remember you. I love you very much and at the present state of health it is not possible to demonstrate it actively. I often think of those of you who are with me and for those who live far away, I say to the Master, 'O Lord, please look after them. I cannot always remember them.'

The Mother was seated on her bedstead. The disciple was reading to her letters written by her devotees. Krishnalal Maharaj was also there. The letters contained such statements as, "The mind cannot be concentrated etc." The Holy Mother listened to these and said in a rather animated voice, "The mind will be steadied if one repeats the name of God fifteen or twenty thousand times a day. It is truly so. O Krishnalal, I myself have experienced it. Let

them practise it first; if they fail, let them complain. One should practise Japam with some devotion, but this is not done. They will not do anything, they will only complain saying, 'why do I not succeed?'

A devotee entered the room and asked the Mother about meditation and Japam. She said, "Repeating the name of God by beads or on fingers or according to fixed number is calculated to divert the mind to God. Through these means it is attracted to God. While repeating the name of God if one sees His form and becomes absorbed in Him, his Japam stops. One gets everything when he succeeds in meditation.

"The mind is by nature restless. Therefore at the outset, to make the mind steady, one should practise meditation by regulating the breathing a little. That helps to steady the mind. But one must not overdo it. That heats the brain. You may talk of vision of God or of meditation, but remember, mind is everything. One gets everything when the mind becomes steady.

"It is quite natural that man forgets God, therefore whenever the need arises, God Himself incarnates on earth and shows the path by Himself practising Sadhana. This time He has shown the example of renunciation. He himself has said that this time He will live for one hundred years in the company of his children."

## THE CULT OF BHAKTI IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA-II

BY PROF. JADUNATH SINHA, M.A., PH.D., P.R.S.

[Dr. Sinha is the author of *Indian Psychology: Perception* and *Indian Realism* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London), two important books on the subjects indicated by the titles. The following instalment completes the article which we have published in the June issue of *The Vedanta Kesari* under the same title.—The Editors.]

### BELIEF IN PERSONAL GOD

THE goal of the path of knowledge may be impersonal Brahman or the Absolute. But the cult of devotion requires a personal God. Devotion is possible only with personal God. "Personality implies a capacity for fellowship, or communion, or a feeling together." So God who is the object of loving devotion is the God of love. The Gita describes God as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe—father, mother, providence, support, lord, witness, shelter, and friend (IX: 17-18). He is our father, mother, friend and lover. He is our very own. He is the nearest and the dearest to us. None is nearer than He. None is dearer than He. He loves us more than our parents, friends, and lovers. He is the Purushottama or the Supreme Person. Let us love Him with all our being and abide in Him, full of infinite love and bliss.

### BELIEF IN AVATARA

The Gita in expounding the cult of Bhakti, preaches the doctrine of Incarnation of God. Not only the human spirits are born again and again to complete the cycle of their empirical life, but God also assumes a human form, and appears on earth in person to give an impetus to the spiritual evolution of the human race. Transmigration of souls and incarnation of God go together. They are equally rational events (IV: 5).

Though God is imperishable, immutable lord of the universe and though He is devoid of birth in His inner essence, He creates Himself and assumes a human form by resorting to Prakriti, made of pure Sattva (purity), through His inscrutable power of Maya (IV: 6). The Lord says, "Whenever righteousness languishes and unrighteousness prevails, I create myself. I am born age after age, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the sinful, and for the establishment of the reign of righteousness." (IV: 7-8). "An Avatara is a descent of God into man, and not an ascent of man into God." Man, however elevated and sanctified, can never attain the nature of an Avatara. He remains a man all the same. God assumes a human form through His inscrutable power and becomes an Avatara. To recognize the divine nature of an Avatara or Incarnation of God in human form is extremely difficult. It passes comprehension by reason. God is infinite and eternal. He is imperishable and immutable. He is unmanifested and inexpressible. How can He manifest Himself in a finite human form? How can the Infinite become finite? How can He bind Himself in time and space? This passes our understanding. The deluded and the uninitiated think of an Avatara as a mere human being with all his littleness and greatness.

They cannot realise the imperishable, supreme nature of God in His finite human form. The deluded world cannot realise Him, the unborn, the imperishable, in a human form (VII: 25). The foolish disregard the human form of God, because they cannot realise His supreme divine nature in it. They cannot, for a moment, dream that a frail human being can be the supreme Lord of the whole universe (IX: 11). An Avatara is a mystery. He cannot be realised in His true nature, because He envelopes Himself in a veil of inscrutable Yoga-maya or cosmic illusion to make Himself incomprehensible to common folk (VII: 25).

In the path of devotion God is conceived as God of love. There is fellowship between man and God. Man loves God and gives His whole being to Him. God also loves man and gives His whole being to Him. "I am thine. Thou art mine." This dictum sums up the relation between them. So there is nothing strange in God's limiting Himself by His inscrutable power and assuming a human form to love man and be loved by man like a human being. It is God in a human form. None can comprehend Him except through His grace. He makes Himself intelligible to a few blessed immortals. He gives them glimpses into His divine nature. No one can have an uninterrupted realisation of the divine nature in a human being endowed as he is with frailties of humanity. Blessed are they who realise the Infinite in the finite—God in man. The Lord says, "He who knows the secret of my divine birth and action, in its essence, comes unto me, and is never born again." (IV: 9).

### GOD IS ATTAINED BY UNFLINCHING DEVOTION

God, the Supreme Person, is attained by unswerving devotion (VIII: 22). He who constantly meditates upon Him, without thinking of any other, can easily attain Him. He is eternally united with Him (VIII: 14). And such a condition can easily be attained through unswerving devotion and love (VIII: 10). The Lord says, "Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, prostrate thyself before Me, Thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy supreme goal, attuning thyself to Me" (IX: 34). "Fix thy mind on Me; concentrate thy reason on Me; thou shalt undoubtedly abide in Me hereafter" (XII: 8). "I speedily deliver those from the cycle of birth and death, who surrender all their actions to Me, fix their minds on Me, and meditate on Me with undivided mind" (XII: 6-7). He who serves Me exclusively by devotion transcends Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas which constitute human nature, and attains kinship with Brahman" (XIV: 26). "I cannot be realised by the study of the Vedas, by the practice of austerities, by charity or sacrifices. But by undivided love and devotion alone, I can be realised in my essence" (XI: 53-54).

Whatever is offered to God with love and devotion is accepted by Him. He does not reject any humble offering of a loving soul. The Lord says, "He who offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that I accept from the aspiring soul, offered as it is with devotion" (IX: 26). But we should offer our being to Him. Whatever we do, whatever we eat, whatever we sacrifice, what-

ever we give in charity, whatever penances we undergo, all these we should offer to God (IX: 27). We should dedicate our very soul to God.

Japa and Kirtana (repetition of holy names and chanting of divine songs) are the easiest means of meditating on God and calling forth love for Him. Japa is the best of all kinds of sacrifices. The Lord identifies Himself with the Japa-yajna (X: 25). Reciting the name of God easily fills the heart with devotion. It purifies the mind and tunes it to the Divine spirit. Kirtana or chanting the name and glory of God in company with devout men is another potent means of spiritualizing human nature. It easily inspires the heart with divine influence. The Lord says, "There are some who always chant my name, prostrate themselves before Me, and worship Me with devotion, ever united with Me. With their minds fixed on Me, and their lives centred in Me, enlightening each other, ever conversing about Me, they live in perpetual bliss. To them ever united with Me, worshipping Me with love, I give true knowledge, by which they come to Me. Out of pure compassion for them, I dispel the darkness of ignorance by the light of wisdom" (X: 9-11; IX: 14). Thus devotion leads to true knowledge and wisdom. Devotion dispels ignorance (avidya) and the light of wisdom floods the soul. The Lord says, "A person suffused with the spirit of God and with a tranquil soul and a good will to all beings, obtains supreme devotion to Me. By devotion he knows Me in essence, and enters into my being" (XVIII: 54-55). Thus devotion gives rise to true knowledge of God, and this knowledge

brings about perfect communion between the devotee and God.

#### KINDS OF DEVOTEES

The Gita recognises four kinds of devotees: (1) the distressed, (2) the inquisitive, (3) the selfish, and (4) the wise. These four classes of persons are devoted to God. The distressed pray to God for deliverance from distress. The inquisitive adore God with the object of knowing Him. The selfish pray to Him for the attainment of objects of desire. The wise who know God are devoted to Him (VII: 16). Of these four classes of devotees the distressed are on the lowest plane. They cannot deliver themselves from distress, so they invoke the aid of God for deliverance. The selfish pray to God to satisfy their cravings. They are on a higher plane. They deliberately pray to God to fulfil their desires for worldly enjoyments. Their devotion is temporary. It lasts as long as their cravings for worldly enjoyments last. The inquisitive pray to God in order to know Him. Their devotion is on a higher plane. They have no mean selfish end. They seek light and wisdom from God not to help them in worldly affairs but in religious pursuits. They invoke the aid of God for spiritual enlightenment. So their devotion is superior to that of the distressed and the selfish. The wise have deep faith in the existence and perfection of God. They have knowledge of God. The Lord says, "Of them the wise devotee is ever united with Me and is attached to Me with a single-minded devotion. I am exceedingly dear to him and he also is dear to me" (VII: 17). The Gita does not advocate irrational emotionalism. It preaches the cult of de-

votion enlightened by true knowledge. True devotion is not blind faith. It is enlightened by knowledge. It is not mere faith. It is knowing love of God. The Lord says, "All these kinds of devotees are noble; but the wise devotee is verily Myself, being eternally united with Me, he abides in Me, the highest goal" (VII: 18). Prof. Radhakrishnan truly observes: "The Gita has not the weakness of emotional religions which deny knowledge and will for the sake of love. While all devotees are dear to the Lord, the possessor of wisdom is the dearest of all. The other three classes of devotees—the suffering, the seeker of knowledge and the selfish—may have petty aims and cease to love God when their desires are fulfilled, but the seer worships him ever in purity of spirit. Bhakti, or intense love for God, becomes then a fire, scorching, burning and consuming all limits of individuality; the vision of truth is revealed. Without this restraint of the spiritual truth, the Gita religion might lapse into emotionalism, and devotion itself might become a mere carnival of feeling." (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 564).

#### THE VIRTUES TO BE CULTIVATED BY A DEVOTEE

A devotee should cultivate goodwill to all beings. His heart should be full of the milk of human kindness. He should be friendly to all human beings, and compassionate to all animals. He should do no harm to anyone, in thought, word, or deed. He should not be a source of danger to any one. Nor should any one be a source of danger to him. He should be forgiving to evildoers. He should live in perfect peace and amity with

the whole sentient creation (XII: 13 & 15).

A devotee should cultivate perfect equanimity of mind. He should not be elated by success or dejected by failure. He should not crave for anything; nor should he grieve over anything. He should not covet or miss anything. He should renounce good and evil. He should treat his friends and foes alike. He should accept praise or reproach with equal composure of mind. He should put up with heat and cold, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, with supreme unconcern (XII: 13 & 17-19).

A devotee should cultivate contentment. He should rest contented with whatever comes to him unsolicited. He should feel quite at home everywhere, with no home to call his own (XII: 14 & 19).

A devotee should cultivate firmness of mind. He should have firm resolution in the pursuit of the supreme goal. He should constantly exert himself, to realise the highest good. He should have unflinching devotion to God, who is the supreme goal (XII: 14 & 20).

A devotee should cultivate a spirit of independence. He should not depend on anything or anybody. He should rise above all circumstances. He should cultivate purity, dutifulness, indifference, and tranquillity (XII: 16).

A devotee should cultivate passionlessness. He should be free from all attachment for worldly objects. He should purge off all egoism. He should be free from the sense of 'me and mine.' He should renounce all worldly efforts born of attachment and restlessness. He should be free from joy, anger, fear and anxiety. He should direct all his attachment and

devotion to God (XII: 13, 15 & 16).

A devotee should do everything for God. He should dedicate the fruits of all his actions to God. He should consecrate all his actions to Him. He should live a life completely dedicated to God. He should live, move, and have his being in God. His life should be firmly rooted in God (XII: 10-11).

### MAN AND GOD

A devotee enters into the very heart of God. And God also enters into the heart of the devotee. God is dear to the devotee. The devotee also is dear to God. The Lord says, "He who is devoted to Me and fixes his mind and reason on Me, is dear to Me" (XII: 14). "My devotee is dear to Me" (XII: 16,17, 19). "Those who are devoted to Me, the supreme goal, and endued with faith, are excessively dear to Me" (XII: 20). "The wise devotee with unswerving devotion is dear to Me; I am excessively dear to him" (VII: 17).

"The worshippers of gods go to the gods, but my devotees come unto Me" (VII: 23). "Those who worship me with devotion, abide in Me, and I abide in them" (IX: 2; XII: 8). Devotion is intense love. It presupposes duality of God and the human spirit. The ultimate goal of devotional love is perfect communion but not identity.

God is always at the service of man. He is ever ready to minister to the needs of his devotee. Those who always think of God, without thinking of any other, and are always united with Him, are waited upon by God Himself. He supplies them all their needs—food, clothing, and shelter (IX: 22). They are in the care of God Himself. The invisible hand

of God protects them at every moment. His benign grace is showered upon them and drenches their very being.

### THE GRACE OF GOD

In the cult of Bhakti faith, knowledge, devotion and beatitude depend upon the grace of God. They cannot be achieved by man himself by self-exertion. They cannot be earned by the study of the Vedas, moral elevation, penances, religious rites, meditation, or the like. They are given to man by God through His grace. They cannot be attained by physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual attainments.

Faith is the beginning of devotion, and this faith is given by God to man and made firm in him (VII: 21). Firm faith is a gift of God. He gives faith and devotion to the aspiring soul, which ultimately leads to true knowledge. It is God Himself who, out of pure compassion, dispels the darkness of ignorance and illumines the soul with wisdom. God Himself, by His infinite grace, admits the devotee into His fellowship and eternal bliss. The grace of God is the first and last word in the cult of Bhakti. It is the eternal bed-rock of the religion of love (X: 11; XVIII: 56, 62, 66 & 73).

### THE PATH OF BHAKTI IS THE HIGHEST OF ALL

The cult of devotion is the best of all cults. The Lord says, "The Yogi is greater than ascetics; he is greater than men of wisdom. He is greater than men of action. And among the Yogins he who is full of faith and with his mind entirely fixed on Me, adores Me, is most completely united with Me" (VI: 46-47). Thus

those who follow the path of devotion are superior to those who follow the path of action, knowledge, and Yoga.

"Knowledge and action are motivated by egoism and pride. But devotion is meek and humble. So knowledge and action cannot excite God's compassion. Those who are humble in spirit throw themselves entirely at the mercy of God, bring down the grace of God on them. They are blessed with love of God." (Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. II; Author's article on the Bhagavata Religion, p. 63).

**THE PATH OF DEVOTION  
IS OPEN TO ALL**

God is the God of love. Love knows no caste, creed, character, or sex. So the path of devotion is open to all. None can deny anybody the right to love God.

The Lord says, "Even if a person of the vilest conduct worships me with undivided devotion, he should be regarded as a saint, for he has well fixed his mind on Me. He quickly becomes a virtuous soul and attains everlasting peace. O Arjuna, this is My word of promise: My devotee never perishes. Even persons

of sinful origin attain the highest goal by taking refuge in Me alone" (IX: 30-32). All persons without distinctions of caste or sex attain God by unflinching devotion to Him.

Even the most sinful are purged of their sins when they are overwhelmed with the consciousness of their sins and throw themselves in utter humility of spirit on the saving grace of God for deliverance. They are humbled by their sense of sin and surrender themselves completely to God, who floods their souls with light and love and transforms them with the magic touch of His infinite love. They are sanctified and inspired with the love of God. The sense of righteousness very often generates false pride and egoism which set up a barrier between man and God. Egoism separates man from God. The sinful, keenly conscious of their utterly depraved nature, are devoid of egoism. They can easily surrender themselves to God, who is ever ready to help the seeking souls. God loves humility of spirit and absolute surrender. And these are offered by sinners to God. So they are saved by Him. Let us all unreservedly surrender ourselves to God and seek His grace, and we shall be saved.

**GOD IS LOVE : LOVE IS GOD**

BY Dr. M. HAFIZ SYED, M.A., Ph.D., D.Lit.

If the *one* had not willed to be many, there would have been no emanation, no manifestation and no creation; there would have been no plurality of lives, no separation, no multiplicity of forms, no egoism, no pain, no suffering, no joy and happiness.

For the sake of manifestation the One limitless Being has, for the time being, limited Itself. This process of limitation in Mayavic forms, matter, time and space, may be called Involution of the One in the Many.

As the nature of the One Supreme Reality is bliss, one of its most shining and outstanding characteristics is love. It is this cementing power of love that is holding the earth and heavens together. It is by virtue of this magnetic force that all the elements of nature coalesce and cohere together. From the lower to the higher region of the phenomenal world, be it mineral, vegetable or animal kingdom, everywhere without an exception, it is the law of love that operates in various forms of attraction, sympathy and mutual aid.

Creation of physical forms, bodies and vestures would not have been possible without the all-dominating influence of love.

Propagation of species, creation and the continuance of the human race would have come to an end without it.

It not only creates but preserves. During the whole process of involution, love appears in the form of attachment to the outer form; but it is

this clinging to the physical form that helps to develop in an individual and a family germs of unselfishness and service. The same process of unselfishness is continued and developed to fuller extent on the upward path of evolution. The more evolved a person is, the more unselfish he is in his love. In the measure of his unselfishness his power of love is weighed. It is the power of love that expands his consciousness and deepens his feeling and endows him with the sense of sacrifice and service. When love is seriously and assiduously cultivated in various ways and in diverse relations, it trains the individual to develop what is called universal love, which leads him on to union with God—the goal of human effort and struggle.

Under the force of spiritual alchemy, what was attachment to the form, on the path of forthgoing, has been now transformed into one-pointed, unswerving devotion to the One Life indwelling in all forms—the Soul of all souls.

## GENETIC STUDY OF MYSTIC EXPERIENCE

BY DAVID MALAIPERUMAN, M.A., Ph.D.

[Religion is a personal experience and a social influence. Mysticism is the technique and interpretation of the higher expressions of personal experience in the field of religion. It is therefore as old as religious consciousness itself. In the West it has a long history from the Greek Mysteries through the Desert Fathers and great Christian Saints down to the recent times. Arabia, Persia, China and India also have had legions of mystics. At the dawn of the industrial age, when religion was well-nigh reduced to a social welfare scheme mysticism in the West entered poetry, wherefrom it emerged into the scientific world as a sort of abnormal psychology in religion—to be suspected by science and despised by religion. However the truth in mysticism has been reasserted throughout the ages. It is now recognised as a universal phenomenon that has evoked widespread interest, and the brilliant writings of Underhill, Hugel, Inge and a host of others have not only dispelled the suspicious odour that has been clinging to it but also brought it to the focus of investigation and scientific study. People are not wanting who assert that if any part of religion is to prove its worth in the crucible of scientific test it is mysticism alone. No wonder therefore that such an

important subject is studied from new viewpoints and approached from fresh angles. Dr. Malaiperuman's short article is a clear and sufficiently documented study of mysticism from the anthropologic viewpoint.—The Editors.]

THERE are two schools of thought, one emphasizing the instinctive basis of religious experience and the other the social aspect of religious experience. Both assumptions may be carried to excess. Dean Inge refers to a deep-seated religious instinct or a faculty of faith.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the instinctive craving for religion, the Psalmist may be quoted: "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks: so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God."<sup>2</sup>

Prominence has been given to different instincts or impulses (to use a more modern term) as the basis of religion. The Freudian emphasis on sex and Trotter's<sup>3</sup> preference to the herd-instinct are examples. Others trace it to the instinct of self-preservation and posit a providence-element. All these theories have a partial measure of factual basis but none of these primary impulses by itself can explain the roots of religious experience. Frazer<sup>4</sup> recognizes a complexity of instincts, besides that of food or self-preservation, "which have exerted a powerful influence in touching his imagination and stimulating his energies, and so have contributed to build up the complex fabric of religion."

Durkheim is the foremost representative of the school which emphasizes

group consciousness. One will get the impression from Durkheim of a group of primitive tribes or savages out in the open going through certain ceremonials best calculated to the interests of the group and receiving from these group activities certain social concepts. The priority of origins over the social situations must be taken into consideration. Facts would point to a genesis which antecedes social consciousness. The religious practices and beliefs of the group, however, are related to impulses, together with other innate tendencies of a more individual character. Adjustment of primitive man to the environment, human, non-human and super-human, was more or less impulsive to begin with. He reacted without having in mind any conception of self-conscious insight or purpose. The impulsive emotional reaction of primitive man in the face of the forces of Nature was indeed prior to his definite conceptualization of these forces.

The core of religious experience is mystical. The roots of religious experiences are as much individual as they are social and the former antecedes the latter. That it is through the instinctive psycho-biological reactions, rather than through social values, that the religious thrill first finds entrance will be evident from the study of the origin of the primitive concept of MANA, which signifies the emotional reaction to the unknown and mysterious complexity of the surrounding universe. It refers to the reaction of early man to the *unknown*, a psycho-biological reaction free from theorizing or

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, London: Duckworth & Co. 1909, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 42: 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> N. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, Macmillan, New York, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Macmillan, New York, p. vii.

questioning, the thrill yielding exaltation, elation and fear. His reaction to the unknown forces of Nature, such as lightning, thunder, meteors, eclipses, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, was as a contestant in the struggle for existence. This was an organic and physiological or impulsive reaction rather than intellectual or rational behaviour.

At a later stage, ideas of benevolent and malevolent, sacred and profane, developed. Mana is something which distinguishes the super-usual from the usual, that power which makes objects either dangerous, effective or uncanny. The notion of this impersonal force may be regarded as the direct result of man's first and most unreflective reactions to the world.<sup>5</sup> The roots of religious experience may be traced to the emotional reaction of primitive man to the universe which so overwhelmed him with a sense of mystery. Mana is the direct objectivation of the religious emotion. The techniques used to relate oneself with the Mana force were mechanical to begin with. But to the extent that this force becomes personified and Gods develop, an effort is made to establish personal relations in order to come into direct contact with this power. Through dance, ceremonials and various cults primitive man felt a sense of self-enlargement, a consciousness of being lifted out of his prosaic everyday life into an exalted mental state. Likewise, during fasts, long vigils, frenzied dancing, men have claimed an experience of contact with this "outer" reality and have tried to cultivate the experience.

<sup>5</sup> Irving King, *Development of Religion*, New York, Macmillan Co., 1910, p. 145.

We may trace mysticism to the Mana concept. Etymologically the word "mysticism" is closely related to mystery. From time immemorial man has reacted with a sense of awe, a feeling of insecurity, with a shudder and wonder, in the face of mysterious phenomena. It is not the mere unfamiliarity of facts "fuzzy with mystery" which initiates mystical reaction. Rather mystical experience is awareness of that, for which the existing equipment of organized habits and impulses is not sufficient to make adequate adjustment. Features of the environment and intricacy of stimuli are found to be too overwhelming for specific response.

There are various ways whereby one may react to the complexity of environmental stimuli: (a) through fanciful and wishful thinking; (b) through intelligent inquiry; (c) with strong emotion, such as love, fear, awe, and reverence, but with minimum of imaginative construction. In the first instance, through fantasy and imagination, the complexity of environmental stimuli may attain in the imagination the status of a spirit endowed with characteristics, and thus gain the semblance of reality with which one's organized behaviour can deal. In the second case, Mana may be the starting point of rational or self-conscious orientation to the world. On the other hand, mystical reaction exists where the subject does not bring the uninterpreted stimuli into the form of familiar objects, but reacts without understanding. Thus we may trace back to the concept of Mana the roots of myth, of science and of mysticism. But despite the development of myth and science there always remain areas of experience which thwart and baffle and

seem to withstand the effort to reduce them to familiar simplicity. These remain as a hinterland of mystery which challenges mankind. When one reacts with love or strong emotion to this area of experience one may be said to be mystical. What can be understood passes into the heritage of knowledge. What is not understood is ordinarily ignored. But when it does arouse emotional response without understanding, we have mystical experience.

The development of Hindu mysticism,<sup>6</sup> for instance, will indicate the evolution of the mystical element from the Mana concept to the highest types. The early settlers on the plains of Hindustan found themselves in a mystery-laden environment. The forces of nature to which they reacted with a sense of wonder, awe and suspense led to the creation of various ministrants who were in course of time deified and distinguished as Devas and Asuras. Sacrifices were offered to placate the deities. Sacrificial mysticism belongs

<sup>6</sup>H. Sircar, *Hindu Mysticism*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1934.

to this level. The first dawn of mystic life begins with the sublimation of nature—the rising of the sun in all its glory, the silvery rays of the moon, the rainbow, the hovering of dark clouds, the flash of lightning or the tremor of thunder. These features have a halo of mystery and carried to the soul the message of a new life.

In the natural course of events, these unknown forces were endowed with an "over-soul" or Atman, the all-pervading spirit which displaced the plurality of deities. The individual began to identify himself with the cosmic spirit. This stage is that of Upanishadic mysticism. Various techniques were later developed by different schools to gain communion with the deepest reality of the universe. Nurtured in the Upanishadic spirit arose the great Bhaktas in later times who soared to sublime levels of consciousness. Since mysticism is an attempt to deal with that which lies beyond man's ordinary equipment, it has claimed for its formulations an authority and sanctity altogether above reason.

## THE STORY OF THE BAHAI MOVEMENT-II

### BAHA ULLAH—THE SPLENDOUR OF GOD

BY AGA SYED IBRAHIM (DARA)

[Students of religious history are aware of the metaphysical blossoming of the Semitic Islam in Persia, producing a vigorous type of spiritual mysticism called Sufism, which has notable resemblances to Vedanta. In Western Asia, Iran has been the cradle of religious aspiration and thought for over a couple of millenniums, and we may say that Bahaiism, a development of the last century, is one of the latest phases of Iranian religion. This Movement, one of religious and even social and perhaps political importance, has booted over the boundaries of Persia, gaining ground in Turkey and Africa, and has claimed several adherents from among the rationalists of the Occident as a religion of humanity. Bahaiism is not an abrupt emergence; it is the outcome of the theological implications of the Shiite Faith which believes in Imams

endowed with superhuman wisdom and spiritual perfection and who act as the channel of Divine grace. The last Imam having retired from mortal ken without a successor is supposed to act through intermediaries or 'gates' or Babs in bringing down to man the light of Divine wisdom. Bahaism has its root in this faith as its history reveals. The following interesting sketch of the Movement is by one who is a keen student of Islamic spiritual culture and a Sadhaka of Sree Aurobindo's Ashrama.

—The Editors.]

THE persecution of the Babis continued even after the death of Bab. In 1851 A.D., two years after the martyrdom of Bab, a great calamity fell upon his followers. A fanatical Babi, whose mind had become unbalanced by seeing the cruelties inflicted on his brother believers and the cruel death of his own master who too was a Babi, made an attempt on the life of the Shah, foolishly thinking that he could thereby improve the situation. This man fired at the Shah when he was going out in a State procession. The shot missed its aim, and the man was arrested on the spot by the attendants of the Shah, and killed immediately. This unfortunate incident gave the excuse to the Mallas to denounce the movement of the Babis as not only outrageous to the Islamic faith but also to dub it as a revolutionary political movement aiming to overthrow the government. Then began "a terrible outburst of persecution, torture, and martyrdom". Orders were given to plunder and persecute the Babis, and thousands of them, men, women and children were mercilessly put to death. The Babis, following the instructions of Bab to abstain from retaliation, showed great heroic courage in their patient self-sacrifice. They were not only fearless in the face of death but tried to do good in return for evil. For example, when suddenly people rushed into some Babi's house with drawn swords to slaughter the inmates they stood

fearless and calm and spoke gentle words to them and even offered sweets and drink to the murderers.<sup>1</sup> The accounts of the behaviour of the Babis even under such provocation is an immortal record of heroic devotion, faith and sacrifice about which Professor Brown of Cambridge wrote: "They may perhaps be paralleled in history but cannot be surpassed." "This was the beginning of the season of the most bloody massacres and horrible torture of the believers. Even to be suspected of being a Babi was, in many cases, sufficient to cause the extinction of the whole family."<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that during

<sup>1</sup> From a discourse of Abdul Baha in London, given in *The Light of the World*. p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> C. M. Remmy: *The Baha Movement*. To give an idea of the fiendish tortures to which some Bahais were submitted the following story related by Abdul Baha at Paris will suffice:

"I wish to tell you the story of two martyrs; one was a Persian noble man, a favourite at court....known throughout the country. It was discovered that he was a follower of Baha Ullah. This glorious man was taken into custody and in company of another was thrown into prison without food or water....On the fourth day they were taken out of the prison and two bears were made to dance before them; also several monkeys were brought in order to humiliate them. Solomon Khan and his friend were taken into a room; their breasts lacerated and in the yawning apertures lighted candles were placed.....then they started on parade through the town. Solomon Khan looking about him said 'There is no need for such commotion, why such ado about our death? Verily this is our wedding feast and we are

those two years, 1851 and 1852 A.D., from thirty to forty thousand Babis lost their lives.

In the midst of this dark cyclone of bloodshed, a youth of a wealthy and noble family of Tehran came forward as a leader. His name was Mirza Hosain Ali Noori, who later on came to be known by the name of Baha Ullah. Born in 1817 A.D., he was then about 34 years old, and had been an ardent supporter of Bab since the very beginning of the movement. Though he and Bab had never met personally, Bab had written many letters to him from his prison, and just before his martyrdom sent him his ring and all his writings with secret instructions. Baha Ullah was famous from his very boyhood for his goodness, piety and love, and in Tehran he was called 'father of the poor.' He was soon arrested by the government, along with his many followers, and thrown into a dark damp cell of the prison with a heavy chain round his neck which fastened him and many others together. They

happy.' Accompanied by a band and followed by people they were paraded through the bazars and streets of the city. People pricked them with long needles, saying 'Dance for us!' With unflinching courage and exultant joy they walked along from morn till eve.....When the candles burnt down they were renewed by the jailors.....Finally they arrived at the outer gate of the city where each was cut into four pieces.....This story will be found in a history compiled by an enemy of this cause, for all has been recorded by 'Shah's historians. At the end the historian says of Solomon Khan, 'This man was possessed by an evil spirit.' Ponder on this story that you may understand the mystic 'power of sacrifice, of faithfulness, how these martyrs were stirred by the good news of the new dawn.'

remained there for four months, subject to all manner of insults and cruelties; and, though the government could not bring a single charge against him to prove that he had political intentions, he was deprived of all his land and property and threatened with death. All the efforts of his influential family to release him proved fruitless; "but through the intercession of the Russian ambassador and other persons of influence his punishment was commuted to banishment, and he was carried under an escort of soldiers to Bagdad beyond the borders of Persia."<sup>3</sup> "The Russian ambassador visited the Shah twenty times before he could achieve this object."<sup>4</sup>

At Bagdad he was kept under police watch, but was allowed to meet others. Here Baha Ullah preached to those that came to meet him, and instilled courage and faith in all his followers. After the long period of the above-mentioned massacres, which lasted over an year, the Babi movement had lost its vitality and was in danger of splitting up into sects. All those that had met Bab personally and understood his teachings having been slain, few remained that had any real knowledge of it. The writings of Bab too were difficult to obtain and none knew the authentic ones from those that passed as his. Besides this, a sect was forming which believed that Bab himself was the Manifestation and they needed no other after him. Baha Ullah tried to clear these and other difficulties by

<sup>3</sup> 'A Heavenly Vista' by Louis G. Gregory.

<sup>4</sup> For details of the interview *vide* Healen S. Goodhall & Ella Goodhall Cooper: The *Daily Lessons at Acca*, p. 58.

his patient and untiring work. He sent inspired workers and personal messages of strength and faith and wrote books such as *The Hidden Words*, which are claimed to be revealed. This particular book was revealed at Bagdad but was kept hidden and secret and had no more than three copies till he was there. George O. Latimer writes, regarding his literary ability: "Baha Ullah, though a person of noble family, never studied in any school, nor associated with learned men of religion; yet he manifested such knowledge and perfection that all people of Persia marvelled at his wisdom, while his enemies spoke of him as Renowned Baha Ullah."<sup>5</sup> Baha Ullah one day suddenly retired into some solitary retreat in the mountain and nobody could discover where he was. Here he remained deeply absorbed in contemplation for two years, and never came out to his disciples even once during this period. Even his closest friend did not know his place of retirement. When he came out after two years their happiness knew no bounds and the event was celebrated with great rejoicings and 'show' of eastern pomp.

Baha Ullah brought with him a reserve of calm strength and peace. His words had the power to unveil the mysteries of the soul. The fame of Baha Ullah had by this time reached Persia and Arabia and notable visitors began to come from those places. Even learned scholars of renown came to get their various difficulties solved; and they all went back with their doubts resolved and minds inspired by the contact they had with the fount of inexhaustible

wisdom. These events were watched by the Mullas, who once more began to agitate against him. They made the Persian Government write to the Sultan of Turkey, in whose jurisdiction he was, to call him to Constantinople. After some diplomatic correspondence between the two Governments, "a settlement was arrived at by which Baha Ullah was to proceed to Constantinople and there await the pleasure of the Ottoman Sultan."<sup>6</sup> At this news there was a great consternation among his followers and many of them resolved not to leave him and to share his difficulties and fate.

Before his departure to Constantinople Baha Ullah visited the garden of El Rizwan at a short distance from Bagdad with some of his chosen followers and there encamped for twelve days. Here he made the declaration that he was the Manifestation, whose coming Bab had announced. One of his followers describes him at this occasion thus, "His proclamation was made with the certainty of the immediate knowledge and Divine understanding. . . . . Brilliant, spontaneous, mighty, he was like a conscious sun bursting on the dark dead world. Verily in future these rays are to be the healing of the nations."<sup>7</sup> The first one to accept him was his eldest son Abbas Effendi, who was later on known as Abdul Baha and also as the Branch (of the Divine tree). This Manifestation took place in the year 1863 A.D., nineteen years after Bab had made his famous proclamation. It was kept secret to avoid the wrath of the enemies and the secret was

<sup>5</sup> *A Heavenly Vista*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Isabel Fraser Chamberlain: *Divine Common sense From the world's greatest prisoner to his prison friends*. p. 5.

confided only to the most trusted of the devotees.

After this Babism slowly began to change into Bahaism and the Babis into Bahais. Bab's movement was more or less confined to Islamic countries only but Baha Ullah proclaimed that Bahaism was for the whole world, the East as well as the West. It aimed at the unification of the people of countries throughout the world into one spiritual brotherhood. It advocated kindness and love towards all and utter tolerance of all other religions which were true in their time and came from God. Compulsory education and a common language were considered necessary, and complete equality was given to women. Bahaism had its deeper spiritual and mystic side too which can be found in the book *The Seven Valleys* by Baha Ullah. *Kitab ai Akdas* (*The Book of Laws*) and *Kitab ai Ighan* (*The Book of Certitude*) lay down the principal rules and the general doctrine. They have all been translated into English by various authors.

After this historic declaration Baha Ullah and his large group of followers proceeded to Constantinople travelling by caravan through Irak and Asia Minor, and then by sea to Turkey. At Constantinople they were detained for five months under official surveillance, and then sent under guard to Adrianople which was considered "far removed from the world which their cause was agitating." Baha Ullah remained for five years at Adrianople. Here too he wrote books and sent messengers to various countries both of Europe and Asia who spread in the world the news of his Manifestation. This was still not quite an open secret and the work of

propagation was entrusted only to the reliable devotees. In his later years at this town Baha Ullah made it public by writing personal messages and letters to all the crowned heads of Europe and Asia. These letters are called the Tablets of Baha Ullah. In these he declared that "for the sake of Eternal love to His creatures He had turned His footsteps from the invisible to the visible world and veiled his splendour in the body of dust." Like Christ he invited them to partake of the Divine Supper. These Tablets also contain various advices on matters of Government as well as on religion. They were asked not to rule harshly and unjustly and to abstain from war and bloodshed.

These Tablets could not be sent from Adrianople but were later on despatched with trusted messengers from Acca.

After five years at Adrianople the Government thought it better to send him to a still remoter place. Baha Ullah was thereupon separated from many of his followers, and his own family and very close devotees were sent as prisoners to the fortress of Acca. The following quotation from Paul Kingston Dealy<sup>8</sup> regarding the place is interesting, and it also shows with what an ardent and sacred spirit these Christian disciples of Baha Ullah adored him. He writes:— "Regarding the prophecies concerning the place and the time of the Lord's coming, we shall quote a few passages to show that the events we have so far related are in exact accord with the scriptures. We read in Hosea, Chapter 2 Verse 15: 'And I will give her the vineyards from thence and the

<sup>8</sup> *Dawn of Knowledge and Most Great Peace.* p. 22.

valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth and as in the day when she came out of the land of Egypt.' And in Isaiah 65: 10, 'And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor the place for the herds to lie down in, for my people they have sought me'....accordingly Achor is to be a door of hope for the people of God; a place for his people to lie down in, who have diligently sought Him; where they have rest in true knowledge of God; and through which door shall go forth the uplifting Word to the uttermost part of the earth.....This is the same Acre mentioned in history, that Richard Coeur de Lion,.....with his French allies, besieged for two years from 1187 A.D., during the holy wars of the Crusade. It was at this same Acre where Napoleon Bonaparte met his real defeat in 1799 A.D., as recorded among his sayings; 'The slightest circumstance produced the greatest events,' said Napoleon. 'Had St. Jean Acre fallen, I should have changed the face of the world.' And again, 'The fate of the East lay in that small town'." Whatever its historical background be, the fact was that this remote and extremely unhealthy fortress had been used as a place of exile. The Sultan of Turkey sent to this place his worst criminals and political opponents. "The deadly climate of that fever-stricken rock slowly but surely accomplished the desired destruction of many of these unfortunate ones." It was clear that the Government intended to put an end to the life of Baha Ullah by his move. The instructions sent to the Governor were also very severe. He was told that they were "Criminals, murderers, nihilists and thieves, and must

be allowed no concessions and liberties of any sort."

The party of 150 members, including men, women and children, were all consigned into two rooms in the racks, within the prison fortress. The food was not only poor but insufficient and unhealthy. Water was drawn from a 'fever-stricken well.' Soon many fell ill of malaria, typhoid and dysentery; but through the blessings of Baha Ullah and tireless nursing of Abdul Baha and others nearly all of them recovered. In this large group there were only six deaths in all, while a large number of the soldiers and the guard died. It was a period of extreme hardship and tests. A small son of Baha Ullah fell down from the terrace (which was the only place to get fresh air) and began vomiting blood. The condition was hopeless and death only a matter of few hours. Baha Ullah went to him and asked "Do you want to live or die?" To the surprise of all, this brave boy replied, "I do not fear death but I want that the visitors who come to see you be allowed to do so." This reply melted even the hearts of the authorities. The boy died to the great sorrow of his father and mother.

At this period a number of visitors were coming from distant countries, but the authorities could allow only a few to meet Baha Ullah. Others had to return after a sight of him through the barred window of the prison. There was no possibility of any communication with the outside world. The supervision was so strict that every loaf of bread that came from outside was cut open to see that it contained no hidden message.

Two years after their arrival, because of a war, the tower of Acre was mobilized and all the Barracks were

needed for the army. Then Baha Ullah was allowed to shift to a house outside the prison, but within the fortifications. Here he found greater comfort and peace when some lenient Governor came. He allowed him greater liberties; while a stricter one made conditions very much the same as before. Here too an official guard was at the gate and four soldiers used to accompany the person who went daily to the market to get provisions. It was here that Baha Ullah met most of his visitors that came from Europe and America and also from the eastern countries. Many of these have written their impressions in glowing terms and there are many books on the subject. Professor Brown of Cambridge describes his visit to Acca in very high terms. The following passage gives his impressions of Baha Ullah :—

“.....At Behje was I installed as a guest, in the very midst of all that Babism accounts most noble and most holy; and here did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and un-hoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the very fountain heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit, which works with invisible, but ever-increasing force, for the transformation and the quickening up of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was in truth a strange and a moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression. I might, indeed, strive to describe in greater detail the faces and forms that surrounded me, the conversations to which I was privileged to listen to, the solemn melodious reading of the sacred books, the general sense of harmony and con-

tent that pervaded the place, and the fragrant, shady gardens whither in the afternoon we sometimes repaired; but all this was nought in comparison with the spiritual atmosphere with which I was encompassed.....

During the morning of the day after my installation at Behje, one of Baha's younger sons entered the room where I was sitting and beckoned me to follow him. I did so and was conducted through passages and rooms at which I scarcely had time to glance.....

I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold. A second or two elapsed, ere with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untended. In the corner where the *divan* met the wall, sat a wondrous and a venerable figure, crowned with a felt dress of the kind called *taj* by dervishes, round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow, while the deep lines on the forehead and the face implied an age which the jet-black hair and the beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love, which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain....

A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: Praise be to God that thou hast attained .... thou hast come to see a prisoner in exile.... we desire but the good of the world and the happiness of

nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition, worthy of bondage and banishment.... 'That all nations should become one in faith, and all men as brothers; that bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religions should cease, and differences of race be annulled....what harm is there in this?....Yet so shall it be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come.... Let not man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this that he loves his kind.....'"

It would take a large space to mention all the interesting events that took place at Acca. From here Baha Ullah sent his Tablets to the rulers of various countries, which had been revealed to him at Adrianople. He got a courteous reply from Queen Victoria to the effect that "if he were from God nothing could harm him or his cause and if not there is no harm done." The Queen had received the messenger kindly and Baha Ullah was pleased with her. So he wrote another Tablet to her promising her a long life and a prosperous reign. The Russian Government also showed courtesy; and a person was sent to Acca to see things there and report. He went back with very favourable impressions. Baha Ullah sent his blessings to the Russian Emperor and it is interesting to note that during later years Russia took great strides in progress, "its population doubled itself in 30 years and its territories trebled."

The Emperor of France, Napoleon III, who was then at the height of

his power and so proud that he is said to have declared, "on this globe, I am the one God" laughed at Baha Ullah's Tablet and throwing down remarked, "If he is one god, I am two gods." In reply Baha Ullah wrote to him, "Because of what thou hast done, affairs shall change in thy kingdom and the empire shall depart from thy hands as a punishment of thy action...thou shalt find thyself in manifest loss....the glory that hast made thee proud, by my life, verily, it shall not endure, but shall pass away, unless thou takest hold of this firm rope. We have seen the humiliation hasten after thee, while thou art of those who slept....."

The subsequent years proved the truth of Baha Ullah's saying. In the Franco-German war, Napoleon III sustained a crushing defeat and after the surrender of Paris he had to flee for his life to England. The Pope of Rome too, who had scorned at the Tablet of Baha Ullah, was warned by him and foretold of his downfall which took place when the victor of Rome arrested him.

The Shah of Persia received "A most wonderful Tablet" from Baha Ullah. Baha Ullah had told the bearer, whose name was Badi, that he will be killed; nevertheless he undertook to take it for the love of martyrdom for this great cause. He went all the way on foot hiding the Tablet on his person; though he met Bahais in all the towns, he passed; he never disclosed to them the great secret entrusted to him by Baha Ullah. When he reached Tehran, the Shah was coming out of the gate in a procession. He went as near as he could and then waved the message above his head so that all could see that he wished to give a letter. The Shah

ordered it to be taken from him thinking that he wished to give some petition. But Badi cried aloud, "It is not a petition. It is a command." Thereupon he was seized. Badi once more called out "My Lord who has sent me said to me that I will be killed." Hearing this the Shah replied, "We shall not kill him then, just to prove that his Lord does not speak the truth." He ordered that Badi be tortured with hot irons and be made to confess all the secrets of the Bahais. After the torture the Shah was informed that this strange man feels happy when tortured and reveals no secrets. The Shah could not believe it; so he ordered Badi's photograph to be taken at the time of torture. The photograph too showed Badi smiling while smoke rose out of burning flesh! The Shah on seeing it was so furious that he ordered Badi to be killed, quite forgetting his former word.

After three months the Shah sent for the Tablet, read a few lines and threw it down saying, "Take it away, if I read any more I too shall become a Bahai."

Baha Ullah had written in the Tablet, "O thou Shah, send for this servant to come to Tehran, gather together an assembly of doctors and philosophers, and we will discuss with them whatever subject thou desireth." When the disciples of Baha Ullah came to know of it, they addressed themselves to the Shah and said, "O thou just ruler, assemble the judges and the priests that they may put a question to Baha Ullah." But the ministers of the Shah replied, "Nay rather, we must sound the alarm that all may beware of such a man." A learned philosopher said, "Verily one cannot speak in his presence!"

Abdul Baha, after describing the above incident in one of his speeches at Paris, commented upon it thus: "They criticised his disciples, decried his teachings, but never his power."

In his later days Baha Ullah was allowed to be shifted to a house which had a better view of the country. They named the place Behje—a short form of garden, meaning joy. He visited the port of Haifa too and the Mount Carmel which Christ used to cross and which the Prophet Mahomed too had visited twice. He expired at Behje on May 1892 A.D. after forty years of imprisonment and suffering.

After Baha Ullah's death his eldest son Abdul Baha, as appointed by him, became the head of the movement and spread its teachings all over the world. He visited Europe and America holding meetings and founding societies, and met with remarkable success everywhere. The following quotations are from Baha Ullah's utterances:

1. O Son of Man! The Light hath shone upon thee from the horizon of the Mount, and the Spirit of Purity hath breathed in the Sinai of thy heart. Therefore empty thyself of doubts and fancies; then enter into this mansion that thou mayest be prepared for the Eternal Life and ready to meet Me. Herein there is no death, no trouble nor burden.

2. O Son of Man, in my ancient Entity and in my Eternal Being was I hidden. I knew my love in thee; upon thee I laid my image and to thee revealed my Beauty.....But how can a man love God, whom no eye hath seen? He, Himself answers and says, "My love is in thee, seek

and thou wilt find Me near. I have placed within thee a Spirit from Me, that thou mightest be My lover."

3. "O Son of Existence! Thy heart is my Home; purify it for My descent. Thy Spirit is my outlook; prepare it for my manifestation." "If My will thou sekest, regard not thine own, that thou mayest die in Me and I live in thee."

4. Verily we reveal according to thy capacity and perception, not according to my state and reality.

5. Dost thou think thy body a small thing, while in thee is enfolded the Universe?

6. Whosoever hath known himself hath surely known his Lord.

7. The World is non-existent adorned in the form of existence.

## THE PROBLEM OF SEX IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

IN the Bhagavad-Gita Arjuna says very touchingly to Sri Krishna: "You speak of Yoga which is characterised by evenness of mind, but I do not see the possibility of its being made steady owing to the restlessness of the mind. Verily the mind, O Krishna, is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding. I regard it quite as hard to achieve its control as to achieve the control of the wind."

And then the Blessed Lord in His infinite kindness and love for all beings said reassuringly to Arjuna: "Without doubt, the mind is restless and difficult to control, but through practice and renunciation it may be brought under restraint. Yoga is hard to be attained by one of uncontrolled self; such is My conviction; but the self-controlled man, striving by right means, obtains it."

Here Sri Krishna holds out His helping hand to everybody who is sincere, just as Christ does when He says: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." But the mind can be controlled only if we follow the right

means unconditionally. There is no religious life without previously attaining control of mind. Mental control, in the case of the beginner, is a regular warfare; and this we can carry on only if we observe strict continence and wisely follow all the laws of warfare. Making use of the wrong methods, we may strive eternally without any success. Religious life without mental control is not possible, except the popular religion of the unthinking crowd which, after all, amounts to nothing more than certain outward observances.

And there is a general rule to be observed by everybody. Never give the enemy a frontal attack, unless you have already become very strong and very well established in purity.

Do you know the story of the monk who was ruined by a rat? There was a monk who was continually disturbed in his meditation by a rat. So some kind people, meaning well, brought him a cat to catch the rat. Now, naturally, the poor monk had to feed the cat and needed milk, and as it was rather

difficult for him to get it always, he decided on getting a cow. He did so, but another difficulty offered itself to him. The cow had to be fed, so people told him: "Why not buy a field?" Finding this advice very reasonable he bought a field, but after a short time he found out that the field had to be tilled. And this meant quite a lot of work which he could not do alone. So he married, and was gone. This presents allegorically what generally happens in human life. One desire just breeds another, till in the end they have become innumerable and can no longer be controlled.

If any temptation comes, raise just the opposite current of thought. But if you can, you should avoid temptations by being very careful in your company. And temptation is mental. It is not what you do, but what you think. So be aware of how people's vibrations affect you and develop more and more a very high sensibility. Do not say: "I have not done anything impure," but realize what you feel and what you think in the company of others, whether they attract you or not. The moment there is any attraction or aversion, be on your guard. Salute all such people from a safe distance. No attraction is harmless in a finer sense, neither is aversion so. Never deceive yourself on that point. You should not allow old impure associations to crop up in your mind by mixing with people who may awaken them through their form and old memories. When you follow this advice and raise strong opposite currents of thought, you will be able to efface the impure impressions in time, those impressions which you have allowed to sink into your mind by your life, and then your spiritual life will be made

safe to a certain extent. By raising opposite thought-currents, temptation, in time, becomes weaker, and finally the new thought completely replaces old associations and memories, but only if you strictly follow the advice. There can never be a vacuum in your mind, so new thoughts must come in if you drive the old ones away.

Control of the mind comes step by step through practice and circumspection, but never hope to attain it if you are careless in your ways. If you allow the attraction of any other person to gain influence on you, you will never be able to attain control of mind, whatever you may be doing at other times. Then you are bound to have a nasty fall after some time. If you allow any woman to meet you as a man, if you allow any woman to attract you or see the man in you, control of mind is out of the question. You should always behave in such a way that no woman will dare to speak to you as a man, and that every woman will feel that she cannot meet you on the plane of sex, that you do not see the woman in her and are not interested in the woman. But for the beginner the only way is to avoid the company of the other sex as much as possible and never to have intimate talks with any person belonging to the other sex. We should be dignified and reserved, though polite, but never allow a person of the other sex to become friendly with us. If others want to stand in our way, we must just brush them aside, even if their hearts break. There must be a parting of the ways, however intimate we may have been before. A love that is dangerous has to be avoided at any cost. Do not grow sentimental. We have to pay the price

for our folly and egoism, and why should we not? If I have made a mistake by loving the man or the woman, let me suffer for it, and let him or her suffer also. If someone wants to embrace me, I must just avoid him. If a person of the other sex offers me kind words, I must just leave him or her. Otherwise he or she kills me, *i.e.*, kills the only thing that has any value in me. Even if such a person tells you that you make him or her miserable for life, there must be a parting of the ways. Once having committed the great mistake, you suffer and he or she suffers too. And very often sex hides under the cloak of duty. "It is my duty to be kind to him or her." Nothing but sex, coming in some nice garb and finding some nice excuses for my clinging to a certain person. Never allow yourself to be caught in the snare of your own mind. "Oh, my heart will break if you leave me." Are you responsible for the other person? Those who have committed the folly must pay the price. We should be sympathetic and pray for such people, but there must be a parting of the ways. We must have great patience because the mind always wants to run away and deceive us, because we are not fully sincere in our spiritual struggle. We succeed only after a long time, but the struggle must be carried on unceasingly and doggedly. Medicine is so unpleasant, but it has to be taken if the patient wishes to be cured.

The new opposite thoughts must be allowed to break our hearts and that of the other person completely. Never be afraid of truth, even if truth means death. If truth breaks your heart, well and good. If truth breaks other people's hearts, well and good. Allow your heart to be broken.

What is the use of clinging to your pet ideas? What is the use of clinging to your petty affections? At the beginning truth destroys everything we used to hold dear. First there comes a new foundation and on this new foundation the superstructure is to be built slowly and carefully, with great circumspection. The laying of a new foundation naturally always means destruction, but in the end, this alone brings peace and happiness and freedom to ourselves and to others. The poison-tree planted by our thoughtlessness and desire must be cut down ruthlessly. Having reared the poisonous tree we find it very hard to cut it down, but it must be cut down.

How to bring in the better thought? This is a great task to be performed by the beginner. The rest can be left to the Lord. But there must be a parting of the ways. It is very difficult, but without it, you will never be able to control your thoughts or your emotions. It is this: If you rear a poisonous tree with great love and care, you haven't the heart to cut it down after it has grown so nicely. You get caught in your own snares. Never listen to the voice of sex coming clothed in the garb of pity, either self-pity or pity for the other person, or both.

The whole thought-structure must be overhauled and reformed. We have been living on empty dreams, created by our desires, and when the whole edifice comes toppling down, we are left standing in the road without any support.

Filling the brain with all sorts of useless and impure thoughts, making the mind a chaos, instead of making it pure and systematic, we have lost all capacity to think in a dispassio-

nate and consistent manner without considering our own satisfaction. We have very many ideas, even good ideas, but we have not the capacity of thinking them in a definite order and in a detached and dispassionate way. Very often we go on thinking and thinking the same thought time and again, but all this is useless. If you want the mind to be pacified, you must go through a series of meditations. At the beginning, have fixed hours and lead a very retired life as far as you can do. Do not mix with other people if you can avoid it in any way. First rid yourself of the too many different thought-currents which are neutralising each other in your mind. Otherwise you can never maintain a balanced and dispassionate state of mind. Dispassion, true dispassion, is so very necessary for all spiritual progress—facing things as they are, not as we would have them to be.

Through meditation the mind becomes stronger and clearer. It slowly develops a kind of very strong non-attachment to everything. The will is also to be strengthened systematically. Intelligence is to be developed, the mind must be purified and our sentiments and feelings must be chastened. We must have a definite system, whereas most of us have no system at all. They just drift through life on their emotions and impulses. In spiritual life everything has to be systematised.

"Gurus may be had by hundreds of thousands, but it is very hard to find a disciple." Nobody really cares to follow the Path. Nobody is really

sincere. Nobody wishes to be on his guard and to avoid contact with others, which is harmful. We even find pleasure in such contact, instead of avoiding it. So for us, there is no real spiritual life. Out of thousands of people there may be one or two who really care to lead the higher life. The others are not sincere. It does not matter whether we attain to the goal in this life or not, the principal thing is to struggle, to fight, to become a man, to sacrifice everything for our goal.

Most of us are worse than animals and more impure than animals. Most of us lead an impulsive life which is far lower than that of any animal. Men just go on whetting their sensual appetites in the name of affection and love, a thing which an animal would never do. Men artificially create sensual appetites and even seek stimulants. We must work hard, but unfortunately we have neither patience nor the will to rid ourselves of our impure impressions and old associations with people, nor do we care to follow the advice that we are given. We have neither the will nor the patience to wait. We must work hard, as I said; and have great dogged perseverance; but, in fact, we have neither patience for the one, nor the inclination to have the other. So our spiritual life just remains a vague and idle dream, while we merrily go on following our impulses and trying to cling to our connections with others or even, what is worse, trying to form new ones. This is not spiritual life, whatever else it be.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYAGISANANDA

[The name of sage Narada is very familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a *Jnani* and *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

### SUTRAS 56 TO 66

IN the previous five Sutras Narada has shown us how impossible it is to give an adequate description of Bhakti. It is really the inherent nature of the soul to love God, but it is clouded by the ego in the multifarious manifestations. As Sadhanas (spiritual practices) progress the barriers set up by the ego are broken down one by one and the intrinsic love of the soul for God begins to shine more and more through the obstructions. As this love filters down through the meshes of the mind, it appears to be coloured by the qualities, contents and tendencies of the mind. Thus during the early stages of Sadhana this love of the soul for God takes on various aspects. These aspects of Bhakti are known as Gauni Bhakti, as they are found associated with the qualities of mind. This Gauni Bhakti, which culminates in one continuous unobstructed stream of love for God, is classified in two ways in the next Sutra.

गौणी त्रिधा गुणमेदात् आर्तादिमेदात् वा ॥ ५६ ॥

गौणी Secondary Bhakti त्रिधा is of three kinds गुणमेदात् according as the mind is Tamasic, Rajasic or Sattvic आर्तादिमेदात् according to the classification given by Bhagavan in Gita, VII-16 वा or.

56. Secondary Bhakti is of three kinds. (1) Either it may

be classified as Tamasic, Rajasic and Sattvic, (2) or it may be classified as Arta, Jijnasu and Artharthi, Bhakti as per the classification in Gita, VII-16.

*Note.*—1. In the Tamasic stage of mental development the devotee does not often know clearly either the means or the goal. He is too lazy and indolent and prone to rely too much upon mere habit, customs and tradition, or some external help. Unmeaning slavery to rituals, dependence on priestcraft, fanaticism, faith in the magical power of incantations and mystic formulas, fear of evil powers which either he tries to satisfy by animal sacrifices and burnt offerings or to make use for injuring others etc. These are among the signs of a Tamasic Bhakta. Rajasic Bhakti is associated with extremely selfish desires and worldly ambitions, and the consequent incessant activity and effort to attain name and fame, worldly power and prosperity for oneself. God is resorted to only as an instrument for self-aggrandisement, and not for His own sake. This is finely portrayed in the Puranas as the Tapas of Asuras and Rakshasas such as Taraka, Hiranyakasipu, Ravana, Bakasura, Sunda, Upasunda and others. It is often seen also in the organised religions with their religious missionaries and church dignitaries, whose main objective is not spiritual

realisation but the conservation of power, prestige and prosperity. In Sattvic Bhakti, God is loved for His own sake; the goal and the means are perceived quite clearly and enthusiastically pursued in the face of all obstructions. Philosophy and science, ethics and social service, poetry and fine arts are all found associated with this stage. Cf. Bhagavatam, III: 29. 8 to 10.

2. In Arta Bhakti the underlying motive is to get rid of the misery of Samsara and to enjoy infinite Bliss. In Jijnasu Bhakti the underlying motive is to find out the reality behind the appearances, the permanent behind the phenomena. In Artharthi Bhakti the motive is to achieve permanent Good for the whole world, the 'kingdom of heaven' on earth. Although these appear as different in kind, in reality the search is for the same God who is viewed differently. As an example of the first we may cite the example of Buddha, who was moved at first by the miseries of Samsara. The Rishis of the Upanishads as well as the Darsanakaras (or sages who propounded the philosophies) were all Jijnasu Bhaktas as their attempt was to realise the highest Truth. The Jewish Prophets, Jesus Christ and Mohamed, are representatives of the third group as they were moved mostly by the sense of sin and were enquirers after virtue and righteousness.

उत्तरस्मातुत्तरस्मात् पूर्वपूर्वा श्रेयाय भवति ॥ ५७ ॥

उत्तरस्मात् उत्तरस्मात् Than each succeeding one पूर्वपूर्वा each preceding one श्रेयाय conducive to the highest Beatitude भवति is

57. Each preceding one conduces better to the Supreme

Beatitude than each succeeding one.

*Note.*—Sadhana raises the mind from Tamas through Rajas to Sattva. Sattvic Bhakti is therefore superior to the Rajasic and the Rajasic is superior to the Tamasic. The superiority consists in the fact that Arta Bhakti is superior to others because after all Truth and Virtue are sought for only for the sake of freedom from misery which might be otherwise unavoidable. Therefore Bliss or freedom from misery should be the final goal and as such it is superior to others.

अन्यस्मात् सौलभ्यं भवति ॥ ५८ ॥

अन्यस्मात् than others सौलभ्यम् easy recognisability भवति in Bhakti.

58. Bhakti is more easily recognisable than others.

*Note.*—Although 'the highest Prema which is the same as oneness with God cannot be easily recognised as mentioned in Sutra 57, ordinarily, Bhakti or love for God is easily recognisable when it comes. For there is nobody who has not had experience of love towards something or somebody at some time or other. He must have loved his parents or his wife and children, or some pet dog or some beautiful picture. Bhakti is nothing else than this love when it is turned towards God. So it is not very difficult to recognise it when it comes, as he must be quite familiar with the emotion of love itself in some person or other.

प्रमाणान्तरस्यानपेक्षत्वात् स्वयं प्रमाणस्वात् च ॥५९॥

प्रमाणान्तरस्य of any other proofs अनपेक्षत्वात् because of non-dependence स्वयम् प्रमाणत्वात् as it is self-evident.

59. For it does not depend on any other proof; and it is self-evident.

*Note.*—This gives another reason why it is easily recognisable. Unlike any other new object the reality of which cannot easily be recognised, love does not require some other proof to recognise it. It is self-evident.

शान्तिरूपात् परमानन्दरूपात् च ॥ ६० ॥

शान्तिरूपात् Because it takes the form of peace of mind परमानन्दरूपात् because it takes the form of Supreme Bliss च and

60. Because it takes the form of complete peace of mind and Supreme Bliss.

*Note.*—It does not require somebody else to tell us that we are happy or that we are free from all worries and troubles; nor is it necessary to reason it out as a matter of inference from something else. On the other hand any amount of proof is useless by itself in relieving our miseries or making us happy. It is a matter of experience and not of proof.

The question may however be raised as to how it is possible for a Bhakta to have complete peace of mind or happiness when every moment of his life he has to think of the welfare, if not of himself, at least of the world. For example, are not the greatest of Bhaktas miserable because of the miseries of their fellow-beings? And do they not exert themselves to relieve the world of all misery? The answer is given in the next Sutra.

लोकहानौ चिन्ता न कार्या ; निवेदितात्म-लोक-वेदस्त्वात् ॥ ६१ ॥

लोकहानौ for the miseries of the world चिन्ता anxiety न कार्या is not to be felt निवेदितात्म-लोक-वेदस्त्वात् because of the surrender of his own Self, the world as well as the Vedas to the Lord.

61. The Bhakta has no cause to worry himself over the miseries of the world; for he has surrendered his own self, the world as well as the Vedas to the Lord.

*Note.*—The Bhakta may be intensely active for the welfare of the world, but is not on that account worried over its miseries at all. It is only a matter of joy for him to serve the world, as everything belongs to the Lord Himself. He is not anxious about the welfare of the world, because he knows that the world belongs to God, and God is always gracious enough to bring about the welfare of the world. He does not stand in need of any help from his devotees. He is only glad to give any opportunity to his devotees to enjoy themselves in his service. All the activities of the devotees as well as their sympathy for others do not cause any worry for them. Their joy is never really disturbed by thoughts of the misery of others.

न तत् सिद्धौ लोकव्यवहारो हेयः ; किंतु फलत्यागः तत् साधनं च कार्यमेव ॥ ६२ ॥

तत् सिद्धौ on attaining it लोकव्यवहारः social life न हेयः need not be given up. किंतु but फलत्यागः renunciation of desire for fruits of action तत्साधनम् helps to it च and कार्यं एव must indeed be done.

62. On its attainment social life need not be given up; but

the fruits of all such social activities are surrendered to the Lord; and every activity that produces such results may be continued.

*Note*.—The Bhakta does not become an unsocial brute merely because he becomes a lover of God. There is nothing which necessitates his giving up his social service. He is not affected by the results of his actions as he does not want anything for himself and as he does everything only for the sake of the Lord. It is the attachment to fruits that should be given up, and not the fruits themselves, and therefore every activity should be consciously undertaken for the good of society. Niskamakarma does not mean aimless activity such as that of a mad man or a lazy man, but activity consciously undertaken for a definite aim and purpose—only this aim and purpose are not in the least selfish.

स्त्री-धन-नास्तिक-चरित्रं न श्रवणीयम् ॥ ६३ ॥

स्त्री-धन-नास्तिक-चरित्रम् Stories and descriptions of women and wealth and atheists न श्रवणीयम् should not be listened to.

63. Stories or descriptions of women, wealth and atheists should not be listened to.

*Note*.—Although all acts of social service may be undertaken without attachment for their fruits, it is dangerous to have anything to do with the opposite sex, or with riches, or with atheists. Contact with these is so dangerous that Narada thinks it would be safer for a Bhakta not even to hear stories about them. If he hears such stories, he may be-

come interested in them and be gradually tempted to give up the service of his Lord and run after the world. So social service must be undertaken with sufficient precautions against sexual temptations, temptations for worldly prosperity, or against lapse into atheism. Thus one ought to examine well his motive when he feels the anxiety to help women in distress, or to earn money to relieve the sufferings of the poor. Nor one should be anxious to read the writings of the atheists, however well-written they may be, for guidance as to how to serve the world. For in all these there is danger of a fall.

अभिमान-दम्भादिक्रं त्यज्यम् ॥ ६४ ॥

अभिमानदम्भादिकम् pride, vanity and other vices त्यज्यम् should be given up.

64. Pride, vanity and other vices should be given up.

*Note*.—Other vices are such as mentioned in Gita, XVI.—the characteristics of people with Asurapratkriti.

तदर्पिताखिलाचारः सन् कामकोधाभिमानादिकं तस्मिन्नेव करणीयम् ॥ ६५ ॥

तदर्पिताखिलाचारः सन् dedicating all activities to Him कामकोधाभिमानादिकम् desire, anger, pride, etc. तस्मिन् एव with reference to Him or in the exercise of Bhakti towards Him alone. करणीयम् should be employed.

65. Dedicating all activities to Him, desire, pride, etc., should be only directed towards Him or employed only in the exercise of Bhakti towards Him.

**Note.**—It is very difficult to destroy all selfish instincts and impulses suddenly; and forcible repression often leads to untoward consequences. They should therefore be conquered through the process of sublimation. This can be done by directing all anger, pride, etc., against the Lord Himself. This will gradually deaden these feelings. But this is not a safe course although it is often found advocated in some Puranas. The safer course is to make use of all these in the practice of love towards Him. Thus anger may be directed towards all obstacles to Bhakti, and then it will take on the colouring of Vairagya or dispassion. Pride may be entertained with regard to the fact that he is powerful enough to resist even the worst of temptations, or with regard to the fact that he is a devotee of the Lord. Even this pride is bad, and Bhagavan in his infinite grace would destroy the pride of every one of his devotees. But this is a better kind of pride than the ordinary pride of wealth, position, etc. This kind of pride, such as that one is the servant of the Lord, would take on the form of self-respect which would prevent one from doing actions that are demanding, for instance, telling lies etc. In this way each of the passions can be sublimated and made helpful and harmless.

त्रिरूपभक्तपूर्वकं नित्यदास्य - नित्यकान्ताभजना-  
दिकं प्रेम कार्यं प्रेमैव कार्यम् ॥ ६६ ॥

त्रिरूपभक्तपूर्वकम् Transcending first the triple form नित्यदास्य-नित्यकान्ता-भजनादिकम् which take the form of constant service such as that of a devoted servant or wife प्रेम लोve कार्यम् should be practised प्रेम एव love alone कार्यम् should be practised.

66. Love and love alone such as that of a devoted servant or wife, which transcends the three forms mentioned in Sutra 56 should be practised.

**Note.**—All the forms of love mentioned in sutra 56 are lower stages; and the highest stage is reached only when God is loved for Himself alone, without any ulterior motive, whether it be selfish ambition, or spiritual realisation. When one does not care even for spiritual realisation, but loves God only for the bliss of His service, that is the highest Bhakti. But even this height is only the last summit on the ascent of Sadhana; for here the lover and the beloved still continue to be different, as otherwise no service is possible. It should not be confused with the Para Bhakti in which even this difference vanishes.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Veda and Vedanta:** *By Ernst P. Horowitz. Published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 217. Price Rs. 2-0-0.*

This book is a recast of the lectures delivered by the author at the University of Bombay. In it the author has attempted a panoramic survey of Indian philosophy and religion. Beginning his theme from the Vedic times, the author has travelled through the Upanishads and the Sankhya system, Buddhism and Vedanta, down to the time of Kabir and Tulasi Das. Not only that, he has a line or two to say about Maharsi Debendranath and Dr. Tagore and about Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. In his 'afterword' he even dreams of world-fellowship on the basis of Vedanta. To encompass such a vast field within 217 pages is no easy task. But the author has succeeded as much as one can with such a plan. His philological assumptions, on the basis of which he tries to build the history of the Aryans in Arctic region and also elsewhere, give to the historian much food for thought. Of course the generalisations in which he indulges may not be accepted by many; yet they direct our attention to a new possibility of research. The book is printed on antique paper and handsomely bound.—P.C.

**Bengali Grammar at a Glance:** *By Swami Madhavananda. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. Price, as. 6.*

Bengali being perhaps the richest of modern Indian languages, much interest is evoked in its study by people of other Provinces in India and students from abroad. A literature that contains the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in original, the immortal socio-religious dramas of Girish Chandra and ambrosial lyrics of Rabindranath may well claim a consideration from the outsider. In order to meet the requirements of such people the present treatise has been published. We believe that the book will serve this purpose admirably and will acquire for them a real grasp of the language. Even those whose mother-tongue is

Bengali will find in the book certain guiding principles which will prevent mistakes and give a meaning to the usages of the language.—P.C.

**Hindi Grammar at a Glance:** *By Swami Madhavananda. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. Pages 61. Price as. 6.*

This is a companion volume to the Bengali Grammar reviewed above. The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture is to be congratulated for publishing such a convenient book. Hindi is at present struggling to become the lingua franca of India. As such, a knowledge of it is of pragmatic value to many. The English-knowing public whose mother-tongue is not Hindi will find in this brochure much help in acquiring a practical knowledge of the language. These two books are beautifully printed and decently bound.—P.C.

**In Defence of Hinduism:** *By Swami Vivekananda. Published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 34. Price as. 4.*

The book under review is the famous reply of Swami Vivekananda to the address of the Hindus of Madras presented on the occasion of his phenomenal success in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Coming as it does from the prophetic pen of the Swamiji, it is above any critical attempt. But it is worth while to remember certain facts in this connection. When the Swamiji penned these lines, Hinduism seemed to be on its last legs. Naturally, he had to write in defence of Hinduism. And what a defence it was! From page to page, from line to line, from word to word—the whole piece is charged with power and life. This and other utterances of Swamiji have galvanised into activity the sleeping consciousness of the seeming corpse, with the result that within the short span of half a century we can now think in terms of dynamic Hinduism. But from this it must not be supposed that the book has lost its utility and value with us. For, not only is it the defence of Hinduism that was, but

also a programme for the Hinduism that is to be. We have not yet achieved our end; we are only proceeding towards our goal. And when in the course of our journey we feel despondent and weary surely these words of the Swarniji will guide us as a luminous star and instil hope into our souls—P.C.

*With the Swamis in America: By a Western Disciple. Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 110. Price as. 12.*

This book gives us a glimpse of the first days of the Vedanta in America and also an intimate study of the pioneers of that movement. The author delineates how accidentally he came into touch with the movement and how under the guidance of different teachers of that movement his whole life underwent a complete transformation. Those were glorious days of the Vedantic movement, indeed. The veritable gods among men then moved about among us shedding lustrous bliss of spirituality all around, always, guiding and helping. The tidal waves created by these noble souls rolled into the inmost being of those around and seemed to lift them into some higher spheres. The records in these pages are true to life and give a delightful reading. As we finish reading this story of the transformation of many lives, we ourselves feel to have passed through some purificatory process and seem to bask in the pleasant warmth of the Pentecostal fire that the great ones carried with them. The printing and get-up of all the above books published from the Advaita Ashrama keep up the usual standard of excellence.—P.C.

*The Hindustan Year Book 1939: By S. C. Sarkar. Published by M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Ltd., 14 College Square, Calcutta. Price Re. 1-4-0.*

Mr. S. C. Sarkar serves to us a repast of varied and excellent dishes. The book is a mine of information, political, economic or statistical. The political information is up to date, and the statistical tables have been drawn from reliable and authoritative documents. There is a very carefully compiled alphabetical index at the beginning of the book. Indian affairs are given the due importance and there is a brief history of the Congress administra-

tion of the provinces under their control. In the 'Who is Who' will be found brief accounts of the foremost Indian personalities. The book is not written in the usual colourless manner which we notice in others of the same category. There is the 'Black Record' of the League of Nations; and the book concludes with an article entitled "The Hoax" written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his most characteristic manner. It is a trenchant review of the recent episodes in International relationship.

The volume is handy and the get-up is attractive. A few typographical errors have crept in. We recommend the book as a specially useful one to all those who are preparing for competitive examination.—K.N.

*The Life and Teachings of Buddha: By Devamitta Dharmapala. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pages 144. Price as. 12.*

The late Devamitta Dharmapala was a missionary first and a biographer afterwards. Hence, his writings can hardly be expected to be free from orthodox zeal. The well-balanced dispassion of a good chronicler is sometimes lacking in this book when he postulates his pet theories, viz., that Buddhism was unaffected by Sankara's advent and that it was done to death by Islamic aggressors only and that Lord Buddha evolved his doctrines from a *tabula rasa*, untinged by Upani-shadic teachings. But in spite of this, the book is interesting because it acquaints us with the standpoint of one who was for the past four or five decades one of the greatest upholders of the mission of the Blessed One and because it forms a handy compendium for the life and teachings of the Lord Buddha.—P.C.

*The Life and Teachings of Zoroaster: By Prof. A. R. Wadia. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pages 140. Price as. 12.*

Zoroastrianism or Mazdayanism, as Prof. Wadia would like to call it, is of interest to the Indians because it has enjoyed the hospitality of their country for the last many centuries. In this book, which deals with the life and teachings of the prophet of the said religion, it is really interesting to see the ethical religion as

propounded by the venerable Zoroaster slowly changing into a ritualistic and metaphysical creed that it is to-day. Much to the credit of the Mother of religions, it points to an example and a moral, as does Buddhism; that human nature requires external forms. Be that as it may, the picture that we get of the prophet here is one of a majestic and august personage who, even though does not inspire love as do Buddha and Christ, enkind-

les in us a spirit of extreme respect and admiration. Prof. Wadia's writing is free from bias and bespeaks of a highly scientific spirit. We hope this book will help in the understanding of a sister religion and will cement the unity of the two peoples, the Hindus and the Parsis, who come of the same stock. The price of these two books seems to be a bit high in view of the ordinary quality of printing and get-up.—P.C.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Floods in Midnapur

### Ramakrishna Mission's Appeal

Readers of newspapers are aware that incessant rain for several days from the last week of July has caused heavy floods in several districts of Bengal. In most places the rivers have either overflowed or demolished their banks and inundated hundreds of villages, with the result that innumerable houses have been razed to the ground. The standing crops have been utterly destroyed by being under deep water. Everywhere it is one vast sheet of water, and it is a serious problem how to save the cattle. Being suddenly faced with this calamity, the homeless villagers with their families are passing their days in starvation on highlands or on house-tops.

Heart-rending tales of woe are daily reaching us from the ravaged areas, with piteous appeals for help. Our funds being too meagre to give relief on a large scale, we have sent a number of workers to the Daspur Thana of the Ghatal subdivision in the Midnapur district to start relief work with the small amount at our disposal. In this area, the embankments of the rivers Cossaye, Silabati and Rupnarain giving way on the 5th instant, the torrents devastated hundreds of villages. Fifty per cent of the houses have collapsed, and the people are in an acute state of agony, being without food, shelter and sleep. For the present we are opening only one relief centre here.

We earnestly appeal to our generous countrymen to try their utmost to save their suffering brothers and sisters from this dire extremity. Funds permitting, we

intend to extend our work to other areas also. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address:

The Secretary Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

(Sd.) SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

Secretary, *Ramakrishna Mission*.

17-8-'39

### Summer Rural Service Camp, Bangalore.

The youths of the Vivekanandha Sangha, an Association that is in existence for the last two years under the supervision and guidance of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, undertook rural work during this summer in a village called Koppa, 16 miles away from Bangalore, according to the plan chalked out by the Ashrama authorities. The Camp began on May 1st, and lasted for 50 days. The village has an inhabitation of 520 people and about 100 houses. The work done by the Camp consisted of 35 night-school classes and 20 noon classes for literacy propaganda with the aid of charts, which were attended by 50 adults and boys. Recitations of Puranic stories and the use of gramophones formed items of instruction in the noon classes. A library of 50 books was made available for those who knew reading, part of which is retained with the villagers themselves. Besides, drainage cleaning, reading out of health and hygiene pamphlets, magic lantern shows with slides calculated to impress the need of sanitation, house-to-house visits for giving suggestions for sanitary improvements according to the needs, imparting knowledge of new games to the boys of the village, and

**Bhajanas on Sundays and Mondays** followed by instruction on the ideas and ideals of the Mission, formed items of the scheme. Two moral and religious dramatic pieces were enacted and some lantern lectures on geography and industries were also given. The villagers were grateful and enthusiastic, and the ready co-operation they have given is hint enough to hope that they were really benefited.

**The Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary, Belur Math, Howrah, 1938.**

The Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters, besides conducting its multifarious activities, started the Charitable Dispensary at Belur Math in 1913 with a view to alleviating sufferings of poor and helpless patients in and around locality. Its immense popularity and the remarkable expansion of its work will be evident from the increasing number of patients that attend it daily. In its first year it treated only 1,000 cases, whereas during the year under report it treated thirty-two times that number. The dispensary treated 31,617 cases. Among these 16,144 were new cases of which 1322 were surgical. Out of the new cases 5,203 were from outside Belur. The balance sheet shows that the total receipt including last year's balance was Rs. 975-11-11 and the total expenditure was Rs. 676-7-3 leaving a closing balance of Rs. 299-4-8. Contributions in kind in the form of medicines and other articles amounted to Rs. 1,500-0-0. The dispensary is in urgent need of Rs. 3,800-0-0 to complete a building of its own which just now remains unfinished for want of funds.

**The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, 1938.**

During the year under report the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, which is an ideal residential H. E. School under the Ramakrishna Mission, could accommodate only 137 students in spite of a greater number of applications received, owing to great congestion in the dormitories. Unless space can be increased through the generosity of the public, this inconvenience will have to be undergone in future too. All the 12 boys sent up for the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta

University came out successful. Classes in Typewriting and Gardening continued as usual. No extension of vocational classes could be made for want of adequate funds. In order to give boys a training in social activities, Boys' Court was held, in which the boys tried to manage their own affairs. The Vidyarthi Samity also met regularly where debates were held and articles were read. Saraswati Puja, Kali Puja and Durga Puja were organised with due *elan*. The magazine 'Vidyapith' was published as usual. The prize distribution ceremony was a great success. The boys gave physical demonstration and enacted a short piece of drama. Besides attending to the Vidyapith boys, the dispensary treated 3,174 outdoor patients during the year with homeopathic medicines. Of these 1,240 were new cases. Minor surgical cases numbering 711 in all were also successfully treated. The Vidyapith library contains 3,500 books—250 books being added during the year. The dairy underwent much improvement during the year, yielding a maund of milk daily on the average, but the total yield is still much below the actual need.

The balance-sheet shows a receipt of Rs. 51,358-9-9 and an expenditure of Rs. 27,576-15-0 leaving a closing balance of Rs. 23,781-10-9. The receipt for the Building Fund was Rs. 3,786-13-5 and expenditure was Rs. 3,678-8-9, leaving a balance of Rs. 108-4-9. But this fund owes Rs. 3,250-0-0 to the General Fund.

The institution requires a Gymnasium for which Rs. 1,250-0-0 has been collected. Still Rs. 3,000-0-0 more will be required for the purpose. A Prayer Hall to accommodate 250 persons is another urgent necessity for which Rs. 15,000-0-0 will be needed. A Library building and Reading-room is also needed in the near future for the rapidly developing library. The estimated cost for a library building is Rs. 10,000-0-0. Besides, endowments for the maintenance of poor students are also required. For each boy Rs. 5,000-0-0 will be needed. A fund for the maintenance of teachers with special qualifications is also needed, costing about Rs. 10,000-0-0. Another Rs. 10,000-0-0 for the improvement and up-keep of the vocational department is urgently needed.

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THE SAGE'S APPEAL

At a time when a large section of humanity is confronted with a calamity of the first order, the deadly consequence of which is beyond all calculation, we mingle our voice to that of the ancient poet who supplicated on behalf of mercy and justice.

यावन्तोऽस्यां भुवि नभसि वा भोगिनामालये वा  
सत्वा: सन्ति प्रणयवचसा तान् सुहृत् प्रार्थयेऽहम् ।  
मैत्रीपात्रं कुरुत् हृदयं धर्मबुद्धिं भजध्वं  
धर्मादन्यत् तमसि गहने देहिनां नास्ति दीपः ॥  
पापं विमुच्यते निषिद्धते पुण्यवीजं ; वैरं परिलयजते शाम्यसुखं भजध्वम् ।  
ज्ञानामृतं पिवते मृत्युविषापहारि ; नेत्रं ततुः कुशलकर्मससर्वी चिराय ॥  
लक्ष्मीश्वला तरुणता च जरानुयाता ; कायोऽप्यपायनिचयस्य निवास एव ।  
प्राणः शरीरककुटीषु मुद्रृतैपान्याः ; नित्योदये कुरुत धर्मसमये प्रयत्नम् ॥  
सन्तः प्रणम्याः परुषं न वाच्यं ; कार्यः प्रयत्नेन परोपकारः ।  
पापावपाते सततं हि तुंसाम् ; एतानि पुण्यान्यवलम्बनानि ॥  
नेदं बन्धुर्नों सुहृत् सोदरो वा ; नेदं माता नो पिता वा करोति  
यत् संसागम्भोधिसेतुं विभक्ते ; ज्ञानाचार्यः कोऽपि कल्याणसेतुः ॥

In most affectionate terms, I supplicate to all creatures—with the exception of not a single being—that dwell on this terrestrial soil, or in the air, or in subterranean regions, as a dear friend, for this: O friends, make your hearts a fit vessel for friendly love and resolve upon treading the path of righteousness always. For the plodding soul, in this gloomy round of birth and death, there is no lamp but that of virtue. Cast away evil. Water the seeds of virtue. Let not hatred gain access over you even at a distance. Be peaceable and seek happiness. Imbibe the elixir of wisdom that acts against the poison of mortality. Lo! this body is not an ever-dependable friend to accomplish your good; wealth is not stable; youthfulness is soon swallowed up by senility; and the body is a prey to innumerable mishaps. The soul is the guest of the body only for a few hours. Therefore, take every care to achieve lasting glory, full of righteous promise. Revere the good and the saintly; drop no cruel word; help others with heart and soul,—hold on to these when you are washed off your feet by sinful inclinations. Neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor kinsmen, nor friends, could accomplish that which the teacher who confers upon you wisdom does,—for he, like an embankment, prevents your energies from overflowing into swamps of unrighteousness, and directs it to the beautiful and the good; he builds for you a bund over the troubled waters of transmigratory existence to walk towards your goal of peace.

—Ait *danakalpalata*.

## MAHASAMADHI

It is with the profoundest sorrow that we announce the passing away of His Holiness Srimat Swami Abhedenandaji Maharaj at the age of seventy-three. He was the last surviving disciple of Sri Ramakrishna; and with his Mahasamadhi closes a glorious act in the drama of Sri Ramakrishna's earthly Lila—the act of the Apostles. The last of those spiritual titans has fallen—the last visible link that bound us with an epoch that ushered in the glorious dawn of India's spiritual regeneration. Not only that; in him India loses a philosopher of considerable eminence and a profound teacher of Vedanta. With the advance of age, his health was being sapped by various complaints, and he was incapacitated from doing active work for many months. The end at last came suddenly and unexpectedly through heart-failure resulting from the strain of a feverish condition which had developed earlier on the fateful day. His body was cremated, in accordance with the wish expressed during the life-time, in the Cossipore burning ghat by the side of his Master's Memorial Temple.

Before he took orders Swami Abhedenanda was known as Kali Prasad Chandra. He was born on October 2, 1866, in Calcutta, the second son of Rasick Lal Chandra, a successful teacher of English in the Orient Seminary, Calcutta. He was educated at Sanskrit and vernacular schools, and at the Oriental Seminary from which he passed the Entrance Examination at the age of eighteen. He was a diligent student from the commencement of his school-career, eager to know about everything. He mastered Sanskrit grammar and prosody at home, and found interest in the Bhagavad-Gita at a very early age. Even as a boy he evinced great interest in religious matters. Sri Shankaracharya's life had a formative influence even then on his impressionable mind, urging him towards intellectual pursuits and engendering in him an ambition for the life of a philosopher. The system of Yoga also cast a net of fascination over his mind. He studied Patanjali's *Sutras* and *Shivasamhita*. Coming to know from the latter work that none could master Yoga without the proper guidance of a Guru, he anxiously searched for one.

It was during this quest that he fortunately came under the influence of the Saint of Dakshineswar, who even at the first meeting blessed him by awakening his dormant spiritual powers and conferred on him a glimpse of the Superconscious. Then began a course of training and spiritual discipline under the Master in the process of which Swami Abhedenanda was the recipient of many divine visions and spiritual realisations. During the last illness of Sri Ramakrishna he stayed with him and served him for two years.

After the Mahasamadhi of the Master in 1886, when the Ramakrishna Order was formed under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedenanda readily joined him. And under the guidance of, and in collaboration with, the great Swami, he underwent a course of education, mastering Eastern and Western philosophy and allied subjects.

Following this period of intense study and spiritual practices Swami Abhedenanda, along with other disciples of the Master, set out on pilgri-

mages, travelling on foot from Kedarnath and Badrinath to Rameswaram, depending solely on alms for his food in the time-old spirit of *sannyasa*. He passed three months in a cave of the Himalayas at the altitude of fourteen thousand feet in spiritual practices. This was a period of intense austerities and hardships marked by remarkable inner realisations. He also came into contact with several eminent spiritual personalities of the time in various places of India, and at Rishikesh, under Dhanaraj-Giri, the great scholar of Vedanta, he made a special study of the subject. Thus he grew in spiritual and intellectual stature, which in after-life rendered him a powerful religious teacher.

In August 1896 he went over to England at the call of Swami Vivekananda to assist him in his work there. He was left in charge of the work in England till 1897, when at the request of the Swamiji, he crossed the Atlantic and took charge of the Vedanta Society in New York.

This he ably managed for more than twenty years delivering lectures and imparting spiritual instruction to ardent seekers. His intellectual powers, mental qualities and impressive eloquence attracted to him many eminent men, some of whom were distinguished professors and scholars of America who became his friends. During this long period of stay and work in America he wrote many original and expository works dealing with the religion and philosophy of the East. Most of these have been reprinted. He also travelled extensively in U. S. A., Canada, Alaska and Mexico carrying on preaching work in the principal cities of those countries.

He returned to India in 1921 via Honolulu, Japan, Shanghai, Hongkong, Canton, Manila, Singapore, and Kuala-Lumpur, where also he delivered lectures on Vedanta. On returning to India he was made the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, of which he was a Trustee in accordance with the original Trust of Swami Vivekananda. He held the post of the Vice-President till 1923. In 1922 he visited Tibet to study the manners and customs of the people and Buddhism known under Lamaism prevalent there. He went as far as the "Hemis monastery," 25 miles north of the city of "Leh." After returning from Tibet, in 1923, he established the "Ramakrishna Vedanta Society" in Calcutta, and opened an Ashrama at Darjeeling, in 1924, as a branch of the former. He was the founder-president of this Organisation. Many an ardent soul would throng at his door seeking illumination and guidance even when he was ill.

This is the barest outline of a great and eventful career. It is impossible to chart the vast expanse of this profound character blessed by the touch of Sri Ramakrishna, or to fathom its depth. Still the prominences of his noble life are too marked to be lost sight of even by a casual observer. Great as a saint, profound as a scholar, talented as a speaker, unfailing as a spiritual guide, Swami Abhedananda was a source of inspiration and help to innumerable people during his lifetime, and even in death "his soul like a star beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

## THE DIVINE MOTHER

IN the editorial of *The Vedanta Kesari* for August a synthesis of religion from the Advaitic standpoint, together with the application of such a view in life, was outlined. According to the grand Advaitic doctrine, the supreme Worth of man consists in the realisation of Brahman, the unconditioned, immortal Bliss, which during man's wandering from birth to death, is only perceived as the Cause and effect of an eternally changing world-system. But in reality multiplicity never exists in Brahman. Brahman is incomprehensible by the mind and inexpressible by words, because It is beyond all relativity—beyond whatever is connected with Maya. The explanation for the Universe is sought by the Advaitin in the principle of Illusion which is neither real, nor unreal, nor both; neither related nor unrelated with Brahman; and therefore inexpressible. But when the spell of 'ignorance' is broken and the Supreme Experience is gained, no such Principle can be admitted as it would cancel non-duality. Entrenched in this acutely logical position, Advaita philosophy safeguards the crowning doctrine of the Upanishads and the divine destiny of man. Pragmatically, however, this leads to the admission of two levels of Reality—a conventional one and a transcendental one—the former composed of God, Nature and self, and the latter resulting from the sublation or 'correction' of the former in the Supreme Identity of Pure Intelligence. This experience comes only in Samadhi, a state in which the ego is

tracelessly effaced. Intellectually the a-logical Reality is brought within the four corners of a logical formulation by admitting the inexplicable Illusion. The logical finality of this position, however, is not quite undisturbed, as two grades of reality are accepted to reconcile the contradictions of experience. Any attempt to reduce the inexpressible to a logical scheme cannot be a cent percent success. "Surely with our feeble power of ratiocination and discrimination we cannot reach the Absolute. Hence Revelation! Inspiration and not Reason!"<sup>1</sup> "The answer which revelation gives is conclusive."<sup>2</sup>

Nor is the negative method of spiritual discipline enjoined by this type of Advaita for realising the goal, entailing as it does a persistent denial of ego and all its products, an easy procedure for common man who knows little beyond the body to which he clings so fondly. "Man's life being engrossed in the physical world, how can he feel the reality of God and the unreality of the Universe? However you may reason it away, your body-idea re-asserts itself ..... Verily the consciousness of the body cannot be killed. 'I am He'—this is not a wholesome attitude. If anyone entertains this idea, great harm comes to him, his progress is retarded and by and by he is dragged down. He deceives His Personal side, as Mahamaya, it is real, not an eternal falsity—It is

<sup>1</sup> *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Vol. I, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110.

others and deceives himself.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore a slightly different presentation of Advaita is favoured by the practically religious seekers of Truth. The most beneficial and distinguishing feature of this approach is the worship of the Supreme Reality as the Blessed Mother of the entire universe and the Blessed Queen of all creation—*Srimata Srimaharajni*. This grand and ennobling conception spontaneously invokes in the mind of man holy sentiments natural and conducive to the worshipped mind. This month being the time for the Autumnal Worship of the Mother in Her benign and wisdom-bestowing aspects, let us reflect on Her nature and glory with a mind bent in reverence and adoration.

### I

The life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna so closely coming upon us afford us a shining example and luminous commentary on the theme of the philosophy, worship and realisation of the Divine in the motherly relation. The more we ponder over the implications of the doctrine he lived and taught, the more we are surprised at their particular aptness for the present Age. He considered the worship of the Divine eminently suitable for this Yuga; and so let us follow in his own words the gist of his message on this important method:

My Divine Mother is no other than the Absolute, the Brahman of the Vedas.<sup>4</sup> Be it known that my Divine Mother is both one and the many, and also beyond one and many.<sup>5</sup> Mother is not different being from God, the Absolute. The Mother is the Personal side of the Absolute. When thought apart from His

works the Supreme Being is called God the Absolute. Again, when we think of God as creating, preserving and destroying, i.e., in relation to His works, we call the Supreme Being the Personal God<sup>6</sup> (Kali, Sakti, Maya or Prakriti). Force in action is Maya, force in potency is Brahman. As the water of the ocean is now agitated into waves, so are Brahman and Maya. The ocean in the tranquil state is Brahman, and in the turbulent state is Maya.<sup>7</sup> No one can say what Sacchidananda is like..... He first took the form of Ardhanarisvara to show that both Prakriti and Purusha are Himself.<sup>8</sup> Brahman is without any attribute in the eyes of the ratiocination of the Vedanta. What His real nature is cannot be expressed by words of mouth.<sup>9</sup> According to the testimony, therefore, of these perfect men—these Vijnanis—the World-system (Maya or Sakti) is not an illusion, but the manifestation to the differentiated, but purified ego, of a Real Being as a Person who has created or from whom have been evolved the human soul and the soul of every created being as well as this universe. This testimony is infallible because it is based upon revelation.<sup>10</sup> First by a process of negation one comes to feel that God alone is true and all else false. But he finds eventually that God himself has become the Maya, the individuals, the worlds and everything.<sup>11</sup> My Mother says: “It is the Brahman of the Vedanta who has caused this differentiation. So long as you say ‘I know’ and ‘I do not know’ you look upon yourself as a person. Being a person, you must take these differentiations as facts—not delusions. My Divine Mother again says, “It is only when I efface all personality that the undifferentiated (my Impersonal aspect) may be realised in Samadhi. And then it is all silence about delusion or non-delusion, fact or no fact, knowing or no knowing.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Gospel*, Vol. I, p. 373.

<sup>7</sup> *Sayings*, No. 48, 49.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* 885.

<sup>9</sup> *Gospel*, Vol. II, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> *Gospel*, Vol. I, p. 99.

<sup>11</sup> *Gospel*, Vol. II, p. 204.

<sup>12</sup> *Gospel*, Vol. I, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 70, 71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, No. 861.

If you postulate the Personal you must postulate the Impersonal; if you take the Impersonal, you must already have taken the Personal for granted.<sup>13</sup> You cannot think of God the Absolute behind the Universe without thinking of the God of the Universe, the Divine Mother. The thought of the one must call up to you the thought of the other.<sup>14</sup> God the Absolute Knowledge-Intelligence-Bliss is the same as the All-knowing, All-intelligent and All-blissful Mother of the Universe. The bright precious stone and its brightness cannot be separated in thought; nor can you think of the brightness apart from the stone.<sup>15</sup> Brahman and Sakti are inseparable. If you do not accept Sakti the whole world becomes false,—you, I, the house, the family, everything becomes non-existent. If there are no supporting sidepoles, no frame can be made, nor can there be the beautiful image of Durga on it.<sup>16</sup> The key to the realisation of the Absolute is with the Divine Person alone, the Saguna Brahman of the Upanishads, the Personal God of devotees. The power of discrimination which the philosopher relies on comes from Her, my Divine Mother, the Personal God. Prayer, meditation, devotion, self-surrender, are all, likewise, derived from my Omnipotent Mother. Such a person cannot be unreal. She is the Personal side of the one Reality....Thus the Personal God reveals Herself. That Revelation is the proof of her existence.<sup>17</sup> Do but come to my Divine Mother you will get not only Bhakti but also Jnana not only Jnana but also Bhakti—not only see Her in Samadhi manifesting herself in form divine but also realise her as the Absolute in Samadhi in which all self in the devotee is effaced by my Mother and there is no manifestation of Divine forms.<sup>18</sup> Perfect knowledge is knowledge of one-ness—of only one Reality behind the many things—one God behind the phenomenal universe. The

knowing one sees again that this Reality —this universal Soul—has differentiated itself into living beings and the world—in short, into twenty-four categories of the philosopher. It is only Divine Energy which manifests itself more or less everywhere. The one Soul has differentiated into many things; in some the manifested energy is greater, in some less.<sup>19</sup>

The above standpoint is equally agreeable to the person who chooses the path of Devotion as well as he who chooses the path of Knowledge. If it may not be convincing to the professional philosopher, that is because any attempt to interpret the a-logical Reality rationally must always remain unsatisfactory. Experience alone can supply the key to the understanding of the supersensuous. It must be noted here that the view set forth above is different from that of the Sakta type of Advaita in the important respect that it does not in the least envisage the tenet that "world enjoyment is made the means and instrument of Liberation." Although Sri Ramakrishna practised the various Sakta methods of spiritual realisation and freely adopted the various Yogic and spiritual principles current in that discipline, he did not view the Sakta Philosophy as above others or with any special favour. However, there is no gainsaying the fact that the ideal of Divine Motherhood is the special glory of this particular form of belief. It is evident that he was not in the least in favour of the view that a Personal God is a figment or an expedient. Maya, too, in the above view is illusory only in the sense that it is passing and changing as ego and its products; but as the cosmic Power of the Supreme Being, as

<sup>13</sup> *Ib.*, p. 373.

<sup>14</sup> *Ib.*, p. 210.

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.*, p. 232.

<sup>16</sup> *Gospel*, Vol. I, p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> *Gospel*, Vol. I, p. 105, 106.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.* 205, 206.

but the Form of the Formless. The Supreme Reality is unknown in the sense that it is beyond description and expression, as the Upanishads declare. The state of Samadhi, stated as identity between the individual and the Supreme Self,<sup>20</sup> or the generation of Supreme Consciousness,<sup>21</sup> alone is its proof.

## II

Although this view is evident even in the older Upanishads it is expressed clearly in some of the later Upanishads. Says the *Tripad-vibhuti-maha-narayanopanishad* ii, "The Supreme Brahman is with form and without form just as the Earth and other elements exist in visible form and as invisible deities. Parabrahman being the whole, there is not in Him the contradiction of form and formlessness. If the all-filling Brahman were formless in reality, that would have rendered it un-Conscious as the void space. Therefore form and formlessness are both real and natural to Brahman." The Divine Player—Lalita, the Mother of All—whose play the whole universe is, is the one Reality—the Supreme Brahman, the One without a second.<sup>22</sup> 'My real form,' said the Mother, 'is the Absolute Brahman; the living and non-living world has proceeded from me. I am the entire universe; I am Vidya and Avidya; I am born and unborn; I am at all the points of the compass.' Mother is the Power of Atman; She it is who keeps the whole universe under Her spell.<sup>23</sup> Brahman alone remains

even in the form of the world.<sup>24</sup> The material of the world is Brahman itself and none else; therefore all the universe is Brahman itself.<sup>25</sup> We find among the one thousand names of the Mother<sup>26</sup> the following descriptive epithets: The Supreme Divine Mother is the Whole that exists for ever; She is unalloyed and unlimited Bliss; and She is Consciousness itself. She is the Supreme Power and Ruler of all. She is the Witness of all world-systems and also the witness of their dissolution; and the various forms also are Her own self. She is self-luminous, the immediate Self of all. She is the abode of all good, destroyer of all misery, bestower of immortal Bliss and granter of all desire. A veritable ocean of compassion She is—the splendour that routs the darkness lurking in the hearts of the devotees. She destroys the ego and confers the Bliss of liberation. The scriptures are Her commands, She is the bestower of wisdom, and dissolver of all doubts. She is the cure for all maladies. Through religious merit alone She is accessible; She is hardly worshipped by the extroverts; by the indrawn She is easily and properly worshipped. She is the Mother of all from the Demiurge to a worm, and the One adored by the whole universe.

## III

The worship of the Divine as the Mother of all is the splendid legacy of the Agamic scriptures, revitalised by Sri Ramakrishna in recent times. Hardly there is an exception to the rule accepted by all the religions that worship is the most effective method available for the attainment of the

<sup>20</sup> *Mahavakyopanishad*.

<sup>21</sup> *Jabalopanishad*, 10.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Bahvrichopanishad*.

<sup>23</sup> *Devyupanishad*.

<sup>24</sup> *Atmopanishad*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Yogasikhopanishad*, 4.3.

<sup>26</sup> *Lalitasahasranama*.

higher values of life. Unless through worship and adoration a certain transformation is brought about in the physical, mental and moral being of man, no man can rise in the scale of values—none can hope to get to the summit of all values, namely, Self-realisation or the realisation of the Divine. Even intellectual enquiry after Reality, if it is adopted as a practical method of realisation, and not mere arm-chair philosophy, it has to fulfil the antecedent conditions of inner purity and holiness through worship. By a mere Socratic dialogue with the self, in all abruptness, no one can realise his real nature—the Atman. Inner competency is emphasised everywhere in the scriptures for a candidate seeking illumination through the major text of identity. He who passes on to an ignoramus or a half-awakened person the instruction that all is Brahman has already consigned him to innumerable Hells.<sup>27</sup> This competency results from the worship and grace of God. And, genuine worship and devotion are not consistent with the idea that the object of worship (not a symbol or sign taken to represent) is itself an improvisation of the worshipper for a still higher attainment. The sentiment centering round any object which is not the greatest, the highest and the best in the view of a person wanting to worship it, is not worship of the truest type. Therefore Paramesvara as the object of worship and Parabrahman are not distinct or different on any showing. The richness and dynamism of such an attitude is amply evident in the view which considers the Supreme Reality

in two aspects, as Personal and Impersonal God.

The religious view that takes the Supreme as the Divine Mother in Her twofold aspect has therefore a significant standpoint in philosophy and an effective method of spiritual practice supported by genuine tradition embosoming the experiences of innumerable aspiring and realised souls. The method is psychological and devotional. The philosophy may be summarised as follows: The one changeless, relationless, ultimate, absolute being, according to the Upanishads, is a timeless, spaceless, stateless, partless, undifferentiated, self-existing, self-illuminating, Self-identity. This all-transcending Principle of Experience is beyond all categories and all the depictions of imagination. The existence of this pure Intelligence is learned only from the scriptures and experience in the supra-rational state of ecstasy born of rapt contemplation. Nevertheless, all know the expressions of It in every state of the mind. By the inscrutable power inherent in this Reality—Its own grandeur<sup>28</sup>—the whole universe of matter, mind and life is evolved; i.e., by its own self-negating power it assumes a kinetic aspect without undergoing any essential change in the Conscious Reality itself. This polarisation into Power and Possessor of Power which, in actuality, are not different, is the root of the universe. The Whole, in the being aspect, is called Sacchidananda and in the becoming aspect Sacchidanandamayi, denoting thus the inseparableness of the aspects. The Mother has two powers in Her aspect as Sacchidanandamayi

<sup>27</sup> *Mahopanishad*, V: 104.

<sup>28</sup> *Svetasvataraopanishad*, VI: 1 and *Mundakopanishad*, I: 7, 8.

or Mahamaya or Adyasakti, called Chit- or Vidya- Sakti and Achit- or Avidya- Sakti, the former leading to the Real Source and the latter veiling it and drawing away from It. Thus everything, in reality, is the Divine Mother Herself sportively appearing under Her own veil of Maya. Man, through the Grace of Her Vidyasakti,<sup>29</sup> or Personal aspect, attains Her pure, transcendent Being. By surrendering himself to this infinite magazine of Intelligence and Power man attains all his ends. Man is God every whit—his body and life are the product of the substance-energy of the Supreme Consciousness, because it is That alone that has presented as the universal form,<sup>30</sup> determined by Itself. Man's self is Pure Consciousness itself; by loosening the limitations of His psycho-physical existence he attains liberation, consisting in Immortal, Blissful identity with the Divine Mother beyond all change and becoming. The Universe is real so long as the perceiving ego is real and when the latter is effaced in the Divine, the former also presents in its true basis as the Divine.

#### IV

We shall conclude with a correction of a common misconception current in some quarters. Francis Thompson wrote:

“....all can feel the God that smites,  
But ah, how few the God that loves!”

Few religions teach that it is the loving God Himself that smites with catastrophes and misery. Otherwise, how could we conceive of an all-good, all-merciful God creating beings out of nothing by his unbounded will, and,

being omniscient, handing them over to Devil to be spoiled and finally to be condemned to hell a good part of it? In fact, God is no rival of Devil. He is the Whole and in the Whole there is no defect; it is the partial view that presents antinomies. As the picture of Kali reveals, Her naked blue form, symbolic of the Immense and Immeasurable without the veil of Maya, is beyond good and evil; yet, at the same time, in Her Cosmic *becoming* aspect, in which the whole creation fluctuates between joy and sorrow, She has one hand lifted up in protection and the other wielding a sword of punishment. Man in his timidity turns away from actuality—from her terrible aspect. “The shadow of Death and Immortality,” said Swami Vivekananda, “Both these, O Mother, are Thy grace.” A God that only loves is often worshipped by the fortunate who possess the good things of the world and are blind to the miseries of the world in their ostrich philosophy, and supplicates to the loving God for more enjoyment. Those to whom, on the other hand, God is only terrible, are still in the animal level of fear. She is both; yet in reality beyond both. Her sport is beyond human reason. The sage recognising it prayed, “Blessed Divine Mother, protect us on all sides.”<sup>31</sup>

Manifestations of Her glory, show  
In power of immeasurable might,  
Through the universe; powers that swell  
The sea of birth and death; forces, that  
change,  
And break up the Unchanged, and  
changed again.  
Lo! where shall we seek refuge, save in  
Her?<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Durgasaptasati*, IV: 9; XI: 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, IV, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Devyupanishad*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *A Hymn to the Divine Mother*.

## GLIMPSES OF INDIAN LIFE

BY A WESTERNER

{Here is a sincere and vivid picture of rural life in India drawn by a Westerner who has taken the view from an angle of vision hardly adopted by foreign visitors pretending to profess a superior culture. The present writer was attracted to India by her spiritual culture, which he imbibed to a remarkable extent; and today it is many years he has made this sacred land his adopted country, embracing the highest Hindu ideal of life. He has spent several years in Bengal and the following colourful rendering of his first impressions is drawn from his experiences there. Nevertheless they breathe the spirit of India as a whole. There is also a special appropriateness in presenting these glimpses to our readers this month; for its background is supplied by the period of the Autumnal worship of the Divine Mother falling in this month.

—The Editors.]

It is Spring time. The Asoka trees are aflame with bunches of red flowers; tall, slender palms gently wave their feathery heads in an azure sky, and the soft air is fragrant with the delicate scent of mango blossoms. As the shadows grow and evening draws near, a cool breeze blows from the river and stirs the leaves of an ancient Peepul tree that shades my humble dwelling place. In a pond bordered by large Banana plants a buffalo lies almost hidden under the water; its black nose alone is visible. A bull calf stands knee-deep in the pond, a blue bird perched on its back. A red lily here and there attracts a belated bumble-bee. Seated alone under a mighty Banyan tree I watch this peaceful scene, and reflecting on my Indian experiences call up pictures of the past.

Many years have gone by since I landed on the shores of Bharatavarsha as the Hindus used to call India, their motherland. Now my Western mind has attuned itself to Eastern ideas. The process has been slow and the adjustment gradual. I entered upon a new mode of life. Old ways changed and previous ex-

periences demanded new interpretations. I found myself in a land of ancient religions and ancient civilizations, with ruins thousands of years old—tokens of a great and glorious past. Usages prevailing at the time of Buddha's advent on earth still continue, and ideals of the remote past mould the lives of the Hindus today. The atmosphere thrills with a mystic, religious consciousness just as it must have done in Vedic times when the ancient Rishis, the Indian sages, chanted their scriptures in shady forest retreats. In this land religion is the most vital fact, the chief inspiration. It is the basis of Hindu society and guides the lives of the people in every detail.

I live among the people of the soil, a guest at their hospitable homes, and I associate with the high and with the lowly. I move in a strange and fascinating world. I have donned the *dhoti*, or loincloth, and the *chaddar*, or shawl, the traditional costume in Bengal, and again the salmon-coloured robe of the Sannyasin, or wandering monk, that I might cultivate that close touch and sym-

pathy\* with the people that opened their hearts to me and made me understand somewhat of the culture of India, the heart of Asia.

I travel over the land and enjoy the varied scenes—men, women and children, bare-legged, with flowing white garments tucked in at the waist, transplanting the young rice in flooded paddy fields; rustic villages, nestled in mango groves, astir with the ingathering of the summer harvest; neat mud houses with thatched roofs sheltering their cheerful owners against the rays of a tropical sun; ancient temples full of mystery; mosques built of pure marble, and luxurious palaces. The bazaars with their constant play of colour and movement and their crowds of brown humanity have for me a never-ending interest. Here, time is of little value, and chaffering and bargaining form part of the pleasures of life. I see magnificent sacred rivers, very ancient holy cities, awe-inspiring Himalayan vastnesses, roaring torrents, deep solemn forests, snow-crested mountain peaks. Wonderful are Indian art, architecture, literature and philosophy. Still more wonderful and of ever-growing interest are the brown, half-clad people with whom I associate.

These people are my friends. I love them for their simplicity. They are naive, grown-up children with clear minds and quick understanding. I love the little children, boys and girls, with bare limbs and large intelligent eyes. Unashamed they stare into my face. Men and women, young and old, are gracious in their welcome to a stranger. They know not how to read or write but they are dignified and courteous. It would be rude to refuse their offering

of hot buffalo milk. I drink it from the *lota*, the native drinking vessel of hammered brass.

Men of the same village call each other brother. The children call a stranger uncle. The women, gracefully draped in the long *sari*, address a stranger with son, and he answers with mother. The mother is the goddess of the Indian home. The children call her *mataji*, honoured mother. And when a son writes home to his mother, he begins his letter with the quaint salutation: "I bow to the lotus-feet of my worshipful mother." Mother is a sacred word to the Hindu, more sacred than father. A father, he says, may get angry with his son, but never the mother. She embodies the ideal of unselfish love and is looked up to as the representative on earth of the divine Mother of the Universe. The Hindus worship God as "Mother", though the conception of God the Father also appears in the *Vedas*.

Both the parents are highly honoured by the children. No son or daughter will go on a journey without first kneeling down before the parents humbly to touch their feet and ask their blessing. India is a land of decorum, not of hurry, as some Westerners discover to their dismay.

And again—so difficult is it to understand Eastern sentiment—to us it might often seem as if the son were rude toward his mother. There is not the restraint of manners that we expect from a child before a parent, and there are no words of formality in the daily intercourse, no "good morning", or "good night", or "thank you." The relationship between mother and son, the Hindu claims, is so sweet and intimate that

words of formality would only hurt as suggesting distance.

Very strange to the Western mind is the psychology of Hindu manners and customs. I remember my surprise one day when I learned that I had hurt the feeling of a Hindu friend of mine by thanking him for a little present he had brought me. Thanking him he looked upon as a formality. It had shocked him as coming from one whose friendship he considered too genuine to allow of ceremonics. And stranger still, the Hindu looks upon our way of saying "thank you" as a kind of payment for value received. For a business-like American it is certainly difficult to appreciate this viewpoint.

One day I unwittingly offended a priest by walking in the court of a small temple with my shoes on. A Hindu had just preceded me, and I pointed to his shoes to explain why I had not removed mine. Then the priest told me that the Hindu was wearing shoes made of canvas while mine were made of leather. It had not occurred that the one could be more pure than the other. But such is the case. Shoes made of any material but leather may be worn in holy places. That is why so many Brahmins wear the *kharams*, or pattens. Being made of wood, these are not objectionable.

Hindu families are often very large where the joint-family system prevails, for then the son brings his bride to his parental home. Families of forty or fifty members are not uncommon. In such large homes the children form merry groups and their laughter may be heard all over the house. The small ones are much petted and they parade through the house and precincts as naked as they were born. A golden or silver chain

around the waist blends beautifully with the child's soft, brown skin; but that is only in rich families and on special occasions. Others wear the pretty anklets with tiny, tinkling bells—a joy to every mother's ear. Sometimes a dark collyrium is applied to the child's eyelids and lashes to keep the eyes cool. This has the effect of making the bright, dark eyes appear still larger than they are. Of all the pretty babies in the world the Hindu baby, if properly cared for, is the prettiest. The children have few games, but they are inordinately fond of stories, and woe to the grandfather or grandmother whose stock of tales is limited. Kites and tops are popular with the boys and I have seen them play a kind of hockey. Little images take the place of dolls.

Early at dawn the women of high-caste families wend their way to riverside or pond for the daily ceremonial bath. Closely veiled they hurry along the narrow lanes, for the eye of man may not fall upon the face of a chaste woman in the street. A few flowers hastily gathered or purchased at the bathing ghat are placed, when they return, upon the altar in the prayer-room.

The Hindus eat with the fingers. With a certain dexterity they put the food into the mouth, the fingers hardly touching the lips. But as a rule eating with the fingers is not an aesthetic performance. The Hindus drink from metal tumblers; they do not use glass. Sometimes they drink from a little sun-baked clay cup which is thrown away after being used. The lips should not touch the tumbler. The head is thrown backward and the water is poured from the tumbler down the throat in a

steady stream. This is not an easy feat for one not practised. Coughing, sneezing, choking and blowing of the nose should be avoided during the meal. On the other hand no distress is felt when sound is made in the process of eating, nor at opening the mouth during mastication, nor at talking with the mouth full.

When the meal is over all rise and leave the room. The hands, feet, face, and mouth are washed, and each one takes a clove, or cardamom, or a little crushed betelnut to "make the mouth sweet." The men smoke the *hooka*, or bubble-bubble, and usually rest after the meal. The women after their meal retire to the zenana, or inner apartments, for a siesta.

Of the six seasons as they are counted in Bengal the winter season is the most delightful. Spring, full of colour and freshness, is followed by the enervating heat of summer; the summer heat gradually lessens during the rainy season when clouds obscure the sky and copious rains drench the earth. Next comes the "season of dew" to prepare us for a gracious autumn with its play of light and shade in the sky. Then comes winter to bring coolness and joy to all living things. The rising and setting of the days are perfect and there is none of the bleakness and cruel cold of the occidental winter. Day after day the sun glows in an amethyst sky. Green meadows wet with dew glisten in the morning sun. *Kokil*, the love-bird of Indian poetry, the finch, the golden-throated *Papiya* and the dove fill the air with their songs. Now and then we hear the tiny tun-tun, the maina, the twittering swallow or the kingfisher with his clear, loud call and a host of other birds. Even the crow is not

wanting. He is as impertinent and inquisitive here as is his brother in colder climes.

Most of the trees are evergreen, a few only shed their leaves entirely. Graceful above all others is the tall, slender coconut palm bearing a crown of gigantic, fretted leaves. The Neem with its fern-like leaves has healing properties and is worshipped by women with offering of sweetmeats and milk and a little open light. The Bo, or Aswattha became sacred when its spreading branches sheltered Buddha during the greatest moment of his life. The Asoka, it is said, withholds its lovely, crimson flowers till the slender hand of a woman has touched its trunk. The Banyan tree sends out from its branches aerial roots that form additional trunks till sometimes a single tree grows into a grove large enough to shelter a herd of cows. The tamarind tree is holy to the Mohammedans. Under the Palash tree with its red flowers poised on leafless branches, some tribe used to offer human sacrifice to the Earth-Mother. Of fruit trees the mango bears the most delicious fruit. But who shall count the trees and flowering bushes of Bengal!

Winter is the season for domesticated flowers. The chrysanthemum, rose and hibiscus are then at their best. Most of the indigenous flowers come between spring and autumn—the fragrant Champaka, Bakula, Kanchana, or gold-flower, Kadamba, the cuckoo-eye, china-rose, and many others rich in colour and deliciously fragrant. But even in winter marigolds, milk-white Kundas, and lapis-luc Aparajitas are daily gathered in large numbers as offering to the Gods.

It is during this lovely season that Bengal celebrates her Pujas, or reli-

gious festivals. The Sephalika bushes drop their tiny blossoms early in the autumn to give warning betimes that the greatest festival of the year, Durga-puja, is approaching. Kali-puja comes a few weeks later, and still later Sarasvati, goddess of learning, is worshipped. No one is supposed to read or study on that day. The boys place their books and earthen inkwells at the feet of the Goddess, and pray that they may be successful in their studies. So all through the year, but especially during the winter months the Gods and Goddesses are worshipped.

It is on the day of new moon in Asvin (October) that Durga-puja commences. This festival commemorates the victory of the goddess Durga, Mother of the Universe, over demon Mahisha, the incarnation of Evil, the tyrant and oppressor of the whole world.

The walls of the houses are decorated with artistic painting, mostly done by women. Earthen jars filled with Ganges water and covered with cocoanuts stand at the entrance door. Young palm trees are placed against the wall and mango leaves are fastened to the door post.

Mother Durga resides at Mount Kailas. But this day she has descended from her lofty retreat to bless the homes of her children, to remove their misery and to fill their hearts with joy. In every home she is visitor, wherever her image is placed —a crowned figure, ten-armed, sword in hand. One foot rests on the lion that carried her through the battle, the other on the shoulder of demon Mahisha, the conquered demon. Close by her side stand her sons and daughters, Kartik, the warrior-god, Ganesh, the giver of success, Lakshmi,

goddess of fortune, and Sarasvati, goddess of learning.

The priest, dressed in white and seated cross-legged before the image, recites the *Durgasaptasati* which relates the exploits of Mother Durga. Then he performs the installation ceremony, after which the Goddess enters the image which henceforth is considered to be alive with her presence and is treated with all the love and consideration that the Hindu mother receives. Fruits, flowers, Ganges water and sweetmeats are placed before her. How beautiful the Mother looks! The children clap their hands, they touch her holy feet, and offer garlands of fresh flowers to be placed around her neck. The air thrills with songs of love and affection for the Mother. Young and old worship. "Ma Anandamayi!"—"Mother, blissful Mother!" is the greeting. Then they pray: "O Mother, blessed Mother, enter into our hearts that we may carry Thee with us always."

Three days the Goddess remains. Presents are given to the children, friends are entertained, the poor are feasted. Then comes *Vijayadasami*, day of universal rejoicing, when all differences are settled and animosities made up in a warm embrace. The divine Mother returns to her mountain retreat and the image is borne to the Ganges in a great procession and consigned to the waters with music and waving of banners.

During the Pujas the rigorous social customs are loosened and Hindu women enjoy a greater freedom in going about their friends and neighbours to see the Image or to help in the household work connected with these feasts. Daily cares and

troubles are forgotten during these few days of festivity.

One beautiful evening, after a hot, sultry day I am by the side of the Ganges. A fresh breeze blows from the North. It is cool near the water and still. I watch the sun sink below a purple horizon, and hear the lapping of the sacred stream against the bathing ghat. Then comes floating on the air the soft, dreamy music of a flute. Up and down the notes run in the sweetest cadences. A cluster of delicate bamboo hides the player. From afar the cows draw slowly towards the river. They bend their heads and drink. After drinking their fill they swim across the strong current to the other shore. The cowherd, a mere stripling, unloosens his little loincloth and winds it around his head to protect it from the water. He enters the river, and holding on to the tail of the last cow swims across. He shakes his perfect limbs, fastens the dry cloth around his waist and leads the cows home.

I hear the chattering of monkeys. They come running from the jungle towards the river. Now and then one raises himself on his hind legs, stretches his neck and looks at me. The baby monkeys ride on their mothers' backs holding on with all their might. Others play and jump, and chase one another. When I throw them a little grain they come near, and some eat from my hand. A saucy little fellow pulls my coat, and when I drive him off he runs up a tree and from an overhanging branch jumps into the river. Others follow and their water-sport begins. They swim and dive and duck one another exactly as boys might do.

One little fellow is sick. He limps towards the river, but he makes

little headway. A bigger monkey carefully smells his body, then takes him in his arms, and strokes him gently. After a while he sets him down and tries to play with him, but finding no response, he carries him towards the river to let him drink. Then he picks him up and carries him off, and I see them no more.

A mother-monkey carries her dead baby wherever she goes. Three days I have seen her now carrying her sad burden. When will she wake up to the fact that her young one is dead? Or does she know it? Does she suffer from the same delusion that makes man cling to the body of the dead? She is an affectionate monkey, but she is not wise. The poor monkey is bound by Maya, the Hindu would say. She clings to the unreality.

All through the year Hindus may be met on the roads—happy groups of men, women and children—on their way to one of their innumerable sacred places on the plains or in the mountains. The almanac is consulted, and on an auspicious day the pilgrim sets out alone or with his family and friends, each one carrying a little bundle or a blanket. Thus they travel on foot sometimes hundreds of miles away from their homes.

Wherever there is a Mela, or religious fair, pilgrims come by the thousands from all parts of India. Men, women and children wear their best attire, the picturesque costumes of their provinces, displaying every conceivable colour. It is a happy, motley crowd out on a holiday. Fakirs perform their well-known tricks: they rest on spiked boards, have their heads buried under the sand, and hold the body in the most difficult postures. Venders prepare popped

rice and confections and offer fruit for sale—oranges, limes, mangoes, custard apples, pine apples, grapes, papayas, loquats, pomegranates, jack-fruits, lichis and other fruits procured from different parts of India. In the little booths and open stalls images are sold and all kind of eastern merchandise—bangles, beads, cheap jewelry, small looking-glasses, palm-leaf fans, pottery and a variety of nondescript articles. Boys and girls enjoy a ride in the Jhula, or merry-go-round. They watch the trained monkeys and goats and perhaps a dancing-bear. The snake-charmer and juggler can also count on a good audience.

The Hindus do not use liquor. At the fairs they drink soda-water and sherbet made of fruit juice. Tea has become quite common in later years. The Chabils supply the thirsty wayfarer with cool and sometimes sweetened drinking water. Rich merchants usually supply these Chabils. A Brahmin seated under a huge umbrella pours the water through a bamboo pipe into the hands of the thirsty pilgrim.

Long before the *Mela* commences pilgrims begin to gather. This morning the sun will be eclipsed. Holy day! How wonderful are God's works. Rahu, the great celestial monster, will slowly swallow the sun and then just as slowly throw him up. Awful moment when the sky is darkened. This is the time to reconcile ourselves with the Almighty;

this is the time for holy ablution. "Salutation to Thee, Lord Vishnu, most ancient, primeval Lord! May through this bathing ceremony all my sins be destroyed." Every one must take the bath—once, twice, thrice immerse in the holy waters. From far and wide the pilgrims have come, for the spot is sacred. It is the confluence of two mighty rivers. Before the bath the head has been shaved, offerings have been made to the priests and the dead have been remembered. After the bath a visit to the many shrines and the sacred tree. One more loving glance at the rivers and then homeward again, singly, or in groups, singing, laughing, shouting.

In the villages curious, anxious faces meet the home-comers. "Did you bathe at the right moment? Did you bring the holy water? What did you see? How many pilgrims were there?" What a time answering questions! What stories to relate! Evening after evening the fortunate pilgrim forms the centre of a curious, questioning, admiring group.

The *melas* play an important part in uniting the Hindu nation, creating a bond of fellow-feeling among the people throughout the length and breadth of India. On these joyous occasions the people put aside the rigid restrictions of their everyday life and all mix freely. They realize that all India has common hopes and common loves.

## PARABLES AND SAYINGS OF MEISTER ECKEHART

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

[Mr. Koch is a master of several European languages and a friend of the *Vedanta* Movement in Europe. He has contributed valuable papers to the *Vedanta Kesari*. The following article presents a collection of a few striking passages selected and translated from the original writings of Meister Eckhart, one of the soaring mystics of Europe. Eckhart, like Sankara, is hard to understand; but when understood, he is as satisfying intellectually and emotionally as the great Indian saint, philosopher and hymnologist. To a certain person who complained about the difficulty of understanding his sermons, Eckhart himself is recorded to have replied: "To understand my sermons a man requires three things. He must have conquered strife and be in contemplation of his highest good and be satisfied to do God's bidding and be a beginner with beginners and nought himself and be so master of himself as to be incapable of anger." This reads almost like an echo of Sankara's *Sadhanachatushtaya* or the four-fold preliminary qualification enjoined upon the religious aspirant who treads the path of Divine wisdom. In the following selections we get a glimpse into Eckhart's spiritual genius.—The Editors.]

Six centuries have passed since the Dominican monk Eckhart of Hochheim lived and taught a life of highest spiritual realisation in a mighty unbroken struggle against the forces in the Church which tended more and more to fossilise Christ's teaching. Nothing in this great teacher and mystic of the 14th century is antiquated, and we might well say that no one among the later German mystics ever attained the depth of his Divine knowledge and his tenderness, in a world of increasing ossification in matters spiritual. Among his great fellow-mystics, Tauler, Seuse, and Ruysbroeck, he shone like the guiding light which tried to free all that was tender and ever-lasting from the burden of lifeless ritualism and priestly self-righteousness.

It was characteristic of Meister Eckhart that his God was not a menacing, irascible one, but a God full of gladness and laughter radiating joy and bliss and fulfilment; and

his words never hit us so directly and clearly as when he speaks to us about the nearness of this Divine delight to all of us. So on our part it needs but one courageous and unconditional step to reach Him and enjoy Him to our heart's content. God, for Meister Eckhart, longs to overwhelm us with His immense joyfulness. He yearns a thousand times more for us than we ever do for Him; for He wishes to give us gladness and infinite plenitude. For Meister Eckhart life was no life unless it was a life in God, with God, and through God, in every beat of our heart, in every thought of our mind, in every affection and longing of our soul.

In Western mysticism no one else has approached the great Sri Sankaracharya in depth of thought and the great Indian Bhaktas like Sri Chaitanya and others in the intensity and purity of feeling so much as Meister Eckhart has done.

In this short sketch we shall deal only with a few of his telling and highly original parables and sayings and shall reserve a deeper study of his many-sided personality for a later paper.

#### THE POWER OF DESIRE

"Whoever wants to see Jesus must pass beyond all objects. How is it that a man does not pass beyond all things at a quick pace? It means that he has not yet tasted of God. Had he tasted of God, he would pass beyond all things very quickly. Yea, not only would he pass beyond them, but he would break through all creation and all creatures. What his love was able to leave, he would break."

That we are not able to see God comes of the littleness of our desire and of the manifoldness of creatures. He who has high desires, is high. He who wishes to behold God, must be of high desire. Know that earnest longing and deepest humility work miracles. On my body, I declare that so it is. Even if God is able to do everything,—this He is not able to do, *viz.*, to deny anything to a man who is of high desire and is humble. And if I myself do not compel God to do all I want, there has always been a lack of either humility or desire. I say this on my body and affirm it with certainty: A man filled with longing or eagerness might get so far that he could pass through a wall of steel, as we read of St. Peter that he, seeing Jesus, was able to go out on the waters owing to his intense desire." "Now I say, a thing which steadily grows while it is being filled, never becomes full. If a great barrel into which one poured gallons and gallons, should grow big-

ger while being filled, it would never become full. Such is the soul's desire. The more it desires, the more it is given. The more it receives, the greater is its capacity."

#### HUMILITY

"Everything must of necessity be fulfilled in a truly humble man. The humble man and God are not two, but they are one. God cannot but flow into a very humble man. A humble man need not beg God, he can command God. A humble man is as powerful over God, as God is powerful over himself. Were such a man in hell, God would have to come to hell, and hell would have to be the kingdom of God. God would of necessity have to act in this way. He is forced to do thus, because the being of such a man is the Divine Being, and Divine Being, one and the same Divine Being, with his own being."

"My humility gives God His God-head. This can be proved in the following way: It is God's most essential quality to give. Now, God cannot give unless He possesses something which is receptive to His gift. Through my humility I make myself receptive for His gift. Therefore, through my humility, I make God a giver and give God through my humility what is His, because giving is the most essential quality of God. It is just as in the case of a master who wishes to be a giver: such a one must seek a person who accepts. If there be accepter, the master could never become a giver. He who accepts thus by accepting makes the master a giver. Similarly, if God is to be a giver, He must seek a person who receives. Now no one can be a receiver of the gift except he who is humble. And there-

fore, if God is to exercise His Divine quality by means of His gift, He thereto certainly needs humility. For without humility He cannot give me anything, because without humility I am not receptive for this gift. And therefore it is true that I with my humility give God His Godhead."

"My humility raises God, and the more I humble myself, the more I raise God, and the more I raise God, the more tenderly and sweetly He infuses His Divine gifts and His Divine influence into me. For the higher is that which flows in, the more tenderly and sweetly does it flow. But why God is being raised through my humility, I explain in this way: The more I press myself down and downwards, the higher is God above me. It is just as in the case of a well: The deeper it is, the higher does he become who stands at the well. Similarly, the more I humble myself in humility, the higher does God become, and the more tenderly and sweetly does He pour His Divine influence into me. Thus it must be true that I can raise God by my humility."

#### GRACE MUST BE TAKEN

"We should bring ourselves so far that we have no need to ask God to give us His grace and His Divine Goodness. But we shall work for ourselves, so that we take it ourselves and do not in the least ask Him for it."

#### THE LOAD-STONE AND THE NEEDLES

"Someone has raised the question, how it could ever be that the senses should have to obey reason?"

"If reason is wholly attached to God and remains thus, all the senses must be obedient to reason. It is as

in the case of someone hanging a needle to a load-stone and to this needle another one and so on; in that way one can well hang four needles to a load-stone. As long as the first needle adheres to the load-stone, the other needles also remain attached to it; and when the first needle loosens itself from the load-stone, all the others also detach themselves from it. Similarly, as long as reason firmly cleaves to God all the senses must be obtained to it. When however, reason separates itself from God, all the senses drop away from it, so that they become disobedient to it."

#### EMPTINESS DRIVES ME ON TO GOD

"I will never pray to God to give Himself to me. I will pray to Him to give me emptiness. For were I emptied, God, of His own nature, would have to give Himself to me and be locked up within me."

"All Holy Scripture cries out that man must empty himself of himself. For as far as thou becomest empty of thyself, so far art thou master of thyself, so far dost thou belong to thyself, and as far as thou belongest to thyself, God, too, belongs to thee with everything He ever created. Truly I tell thee, as truly as God is God and I am man: hadst thou become as empty of thyself as thou art empty of the highest angel:—the highest angel would be as much thy very own as thou thyself art thy very own. In this exercise man becomes master of himself."

#### TRUTH

"What is Truth? Truth is something so noble that, if it were possible that God could ever turn away from Truth, I would cleave to Truth and leave God."

**THE HARDEST VICTORY**

“Never was there truer and greater manhood, more manly strife or struggle, than where a man forgets and denies himself.”

**EVIL CANNOT BE LOVED**

“God is Love. With His love He gives all creatures their being and their life, and with His love He sustains them. The colour which is on the wall is sustained by the wall. Thus all creatures are sustained in their being by Love which is God. If the colours were taken from the wall, they would lose their being. Similarly, all creatures would lose their being if they were taken from love, which is God. God is Love and so lovable is He that all that can love, must love Him, whether He likes it or not. There is no creature so vile that it could love something which is evil. For, whatever one loves must be either good, or at least seeming to be good.”

**GOD ALONE GIVES BLISS**

“Everything that God ever created or could ever create, if God were to give all that at once to my soul, but not Himself, even should He remain a hair's breadth distant from it, would not suffice for my soul, and I would not be full of bliss. But if I am full of bliss, the whole world is within me and also God, and where I am, there is God, and where God is, there am I.”

**HEIGHT AND DEPTH**

“Whoever wants to come into the ground of God, in his greatest, must first come into his own ground, into his smallest. For no one can know God who has not first known himself. He must step down to his lowest

depths and into God's innermost, and step into his beginning and his highest peaks, for all that God is able to do meets there.”

**CHALLENGE GOD HIMSELF**

“When the soul lives in its innermost part where it is the perfect likeness of God, it possesses perfect union, and no creatures can ever again separate it therefrom. Challenge God! Challenge the angels! Challenge all creatures! They can no more separate the soul from the original image wherein it is one with God. This is perfect union, and therein lies true bliss.”

**GOD IS A NEGATION OF NEGATION**

“The Divine One is a negation of negation and a longing of longing. What does 'one' mean? Something that can be added to. Now the soul grasps the idea of the Godhead, when it stands alone, when nothing is added to it, when there is no thinking at all to be done. The One is a negation of negation. All creatures carry a negation within themselves. One negates that it is the other. An angel negates that he is another creature. God, however, possesses a negation of negation. He is one and negates all else, for there is nothing at all except God.”

**WHY WE ARE NOT TO FEAR GOD**

“Our Lord cannot bear that anyone who always loves Him should be afflicted. For, 'fear hath torment.' St. John also says, 'Love casteth out fear.' That is why love can suffer neither fear nor pain. For the more man increases in love, the more he decreases in fear, and when he is perfect in love, he loses all fear completely. It is true that at the beginning of a good life, fear is help-

ful for man, for then it is an access to love for him. Just as the puncher or the awl makes room for the wire, so it is this latter and not the iron that binds the shoe; and just as the bristle at the end of the wire makes the wire pass through, while the bristle remains outside and the wire stitches together, so does fear lead right on to love, but only love binds to God, whereas fear must depart."

**IN GOD THERE IS NEITHER**

**HENRY NOR CONRAD**

"When I am united to God in Whom all things, past, present and future, are present, they are equally near and in an equal way One; they are all in God and all in me. There one need neither think of Henry nor of Conrad. If one prays for anything else but God alone, I can only call it idolatry, an offence to God. But those who pray in spirit and in truth, they pray aright. If I pray for anyone, for Henry or for Conrad, I am least of all really praying. But when I pray for no one, I am praying best. And when I no longer desire anything at all or ask for anything at all, then I am most truly myself, for in God there is neither Henry nor Conrad. If one prays to God for anything else than Himself, this is not proper. It is a sign of imperfection and infidelity. For then one wishes to put something beside God, wants to annihilate God, and make a God of nothing."

**HOW GOD ANNIHILATES HIMSELF  
IN THE SOUL**

"Now I wish you to understand me rightly as I am going to bring out a thought of which I have never spoken yet."

"The worthy Dionysius says, 'If God no longer exists for the mind, then the original eternal image also no longer exists, which yet is its everlasting source.' I have asserted and still declare: God has only done one work in all eternity. And in this work He has also created the soul for Himself. From this work the soul has come forth into a creaturely being, has become different from God and estranged to its own eternal original image. But only in this creatureliness God became really posited, so that He did not really exist at all before this soul became creaturely. I also sometimes said: The fact that God is God depends on me. God receives His existence from the soul, His Godhead, however, He receives from His own nature. For before the creature came into being, God was not yet God, but He already was the Godhead, and this He has not received from the soul. Now when God finds an annihilated soul that has become nothing in its self and all its characteristics, through grace, God works His own eternal work which is above all grace in that soul and lifts it up out of its creatureliness. Here, however, God annihilates Himself in the soul, and thus there remains neither God nor soul! Be certain: This work is most of all God's very own. Has it come to pass that the soul is able to suffer God's working within itself, it is also enabled no longer to have any God at all. Now the soul has returned to the eternal original image in which God beheld it in all eternity: His Eternal Word."

**I LIKE TO LIVE**

"Sometimes I have said: He who seeks God and something else as well

as God, does not find God. But he who truly seeks God alone, never finds God alone, for together with God he also finds all God can offer. If thou seekest God and seekest Him for thine own profit or for the sake of thine own bliss, truly, then thou dost not seek God! Therefore our Lord says that the true worshippers worship the Father, and he speaks well. If one would ask a good man: Why dost thou seek God? He would answer: Because He is God. Why dost thou seek Truth? Because it is Truth. Why dost thou seek justice? Because it is justice. These people are right. For all things which have their being in time, ask a question. For instance, he who would ask a man: Why dost thou eat?—would receive the answer: So that I may have strength.—Why dost thou sleep? For the same reason.—And thus it is with all things which have their being in time. But he would ask a good man: Why dost thou love God?—would receive the answer: I do not know, it is just because He is God.—Why dost thou love Truth.—For the sake of Truth.—Why dost thou love justice?—For the sake of justice.—Why dost thou love Goodness?—For the sake of goodness.—And why dost thou live?—Indeed, I do not know, I like to live.”

#### GOD AS THE MILCH-COW

“Some people are so constituted that they wish to see God with their own eyes as they would look at a cow, and they want to love God in the way in which they love a cow. Thou lovest the cow because of the milk and the cheese and their own profit. Thus also do the people who love God for the sake of external riches or inward consolation. They do not love God properly but they love God

for the sake of their own profit. Every intention of thy mind, if it be not God alone in Himself may be as good as it possibly can be; but it will all be an obstacle to thee and to thy innermost Truth.”

#### THE CENTRE OF ACTION

“I frequently say: Those who wish to begin a good life, should do like one who describes a circle. When he has rightly placed the centre of the circle, and when it is fixed, the line of the circle becomes good. This means: Man should learn first to keep his heart firmly centred in God, for then he will also become steady in all his works. For when his heart is unsteady, whatever great things he does, it will all come to nothing.”

In a time like the present when all values are indiscriminately thrown into the crucible and the opposing currents in their blind and self-willed struggles for supremacy seem incapable of bringing to the world a constructive order, it is well to turn to the pages of the spiritually great men of the East and the West. Modern life has grown so much into outward mechanical things that its tremendous dynamism tends to become more and more aimless,—dynamism for the sake of dynamism, movement for the sake of movement. And the blind dynamism is bound to lead to a catastrophe, because it does not go down to the essentials of life and culture. An age which gives up all supra-temporal and supra-spatial values and takes the ephemeral activities of its outward mechanised life to be the all in all, to be Life as such, is doomed to bring chaos and untold misery. And in the great work of reorientation that is the task of the present day, the contribution

of the saints and sages of humanity should not be pushed carelessly aside as antiquated and illusory. For it is

they above all who can show humanity the true path of evolution and attainment.

## HOW TO PRACTISE YOGA ACTUALLY?

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants at Wiesbaden, Germany, in December 1933.—The Editors.]

### I

MANY people want to begin from the topmost rung of the ladder; but that cannot be done. There are no long jumps in spiritual life; neither can anything be achieved without first finding out where one really stands. High philosophical flights and wonderful metaphysical dreams do not mean realisation, and by themselves they never lead to realisation, but only to abstract and superfine speculations that have no connection at all with real or practical life. They do not change the life of persons who indulge in them in any way. We should know where we stand and then proceed from there. We must begin as beginners and go on step by step. As an ideal Monism may be all right for us; but when we come down to the practical aspects, we are dualists and shall remain dualists for a long time to come. I am always amused when I hear everybody talking in high terms about the Absolute, the Principle, etc., because in our case all these are nothing but empty speculations and frothy words. They do not even mean that that particular person is fit for the Monistic path. Nobody who stands in Dualism, in whatever way this may be, is a Monist, whether Monism appeals to him or not. Very often the mind of the modern man revolts against the

idea of any particular discipline. It says, "Why should we busy ourselves with that? Haven't we got enough drudgery in the world? So why should we follow practices which do not appeal to us? We want the Absolute, so what is the use of Japam, of attributes, of personal forms? Let us reach the Absolute. Let us worship the Divine 'in spirit and in truth!'" All this, no doubt, sounds very grand and highly spiritual; but as soon as we come down to realities, we find out it does not mean anything at all. Mostly such people are convinced dualists as far as their own actions in daily life go. To worship God 'in spirit and in truth' is all right. It is very good, but where is the beginner who can do so? This is the point. For most people it means just haziness, vagueness,—hazy feeling and hazy thinking and acting in a way that has no connection at all with the Divine.

Our mind is always out to deceive us and play tricks on us. Therefore we need strict daily discipline in everything we do.

How to begin?—That is the point. How to get the necessary mental training?—That is the problem before us. Different thoughts constantly keep cropping up in our minds. When we wish to make the mind calm, the mind becomes most disturb-

ed. It revolts the very moment we try to concentrate. It suddenly takes the form of a mighty ocean in which we are in danger of being drowned. The whole surface of the mind is disturbed by mighty thought-waves, and the more we try to calm it, the mightier these become. So meditation makes us very tired in the beginning instead of soothing us and bringing us light as it should.

As in the case of a horse-trainer, who has to take great trouble to break the horse, similarly we shall have to follow a certain definite system of discipline, from which we should not deviate, to break the mind. In our spiritual discipline there must be great definiteness regarding everything. It won't do for us to put two legs in two different boats. We must learn to follow one course definitely without vacillating, to proceed step by step, if we wish to reach the goal one day.

## II

What are the conditions for meditation? For meditation and for all forms of spiritual practice the first point is a steady posture (*asana*), usually a sitting posture. So Patanjali says, "Any posture that is steady and pleasant." Squatting, no doubt, is very helpful, because the weight of the body is perfectly balanced in that posture, but it must be easy, otherwise it disturbs the mind of the person trying to attempt spiritual practices. For us, it is natural, but for many Western people it may take quite a lot of practice, and some may not even be able to do it at all. Anyway, for those who can, it is the best posture for spiritual practice.

The second most important point is continence. Without Brahma-

charya (continence), there is no real spiritual life. When you allow the water to flow out through the rat-holes of the body by wasting it through sex and sensual desire, there will be no energy left for the higher forms of spiritual practice. No use rowing a boat while it is tightly anchored near the shore. Sri Ramakrishna said, "What we want is communion with the Divine." If there is any obstruction in the form of sexual desire or intercourse, communion is not possible. It is just like the case of the broken telegraph-wire. The electricity may be there, the operator may be there, but the communication will never reach its destination as long as the broken wire is not repaired, or as long as some obstructing non-conductor is not removed. "In heaven there is no marriage nor giving in marriage."

Our cravings of the flesh, our desires, usually stand in the way of real religion. The sham thing you ordinarily see in life, going to places of worship and hearing religious instruction and doing as one pleases is not true religion. This kind of thing may have proved highly profitable for the Church, but it is not Christ's teaching. The right mood is essential for all forms of spiritual practice, and without spiritual practice there never can be anything like spiritual life. The early Christians knew this perfectly well. So did many of the great mystics of the Middle Ages. But now the whole tradition seems to be lost in the West; and that is why the West is sinking to the level of the brute.

Without ethical culture we can never come in close touch with the Divine. If, after creating a perfect void, we are able to have the right

thought, well and good. Then this kind of practice is very useful. But it is very dangerous for the beginner, because he does not succeed in having the right thought after creating the void, but just falls asleep or is dominated by his subconscious mind. In the case of the beginner there is always the great danger of his mind falling below the threshold of consciousness.

As has been mentioned above, the mind is very much like an unruly horse which has to be broken. The horse acts in two ways: When we want to drive it, it either becomes dreadfully restive or it simply lies down and refuses to move. It does not wish to be steady. So in order to break this unruly horse of our mind a certain amount of ethical culture is necessary. So long as the thought of sex and money is allowed to dominate it, it cannot be broken.

### III

What are the virtues to be practised in spiritual life? First comes, as Manu says, Ahimsa or not harbouring any ill-feeling towards others whether they are good or bad. Realise these ill feelings as they arise in the mind. With a disturbed mind it is not possible to have any form of concentration. It is not possible for us to have a concentrated mind and at the same time to cherish an evil thought against anybody. I am speaking of higher concentration.

Next comes Non-stealing. This must never be taken in the gross sense only. Anything that we wish to possess at the cost of anybody else, anything that we get by unfair means, is stealing.

Third: Purity. Physical as well as mental purity is absolutely necessary.

Sometimes we commit the mistake of stressing only physical purity, because it is so much more difficult to achieve true mental purity. There are many who satisfy themselves by taking baths, but who do not trouble themselves to have a pure mind. It is, however, impossible to concentrate a dirty mind on higher things. So long as there is the impure thought of a woman in man or of a man in woman, real higher concentration is out of the question. There may not be any gross physical relations, but it is sex all the same, and so long as there is any form of sex, purity has not been achieved, and without purity having been achieved the higher spiritual life remains very far off.

Fourth: Sense-control. One who abandons himself to any form of sense-enjoyment cannot have any calmness or peace of mind. So he cannot do his practices well, however hard he may try. And there is this great point to note: Before the aspirant takes up the practice of *asana* (posture) he must already have gone through the whole of this ethical culture. So highly do the teachers of spiritual life value purity and non-attachment.

### IV

Now let us sum up what we have to do and what we have to practise in spiritual life.

- (1) We must practise a steady posture (*asana*);
- (2) We must calm the mind;
- (3) We should make salutations to all the teachers of the world or to one particular teacher if this appeals to us more.

And what is necessary for really calming the mind has already been

told. The mind can be calmed only by good and perfectly pure thoughts —only by holy thoughts, not connected with the body or the world.

The Upanishads say, "We must worship the Lord with a calm mind." So this calming of the mind is most important for all aspirants. In spiritual life especially we should follow the footsteps of the Great Ones.

We generally find it helpful to pray not only for our own spiritual welfare but also for that of others. Pray intensely for concentration, for calmness, for singleness of purpose, and for your own spiritual welfare as well as that of all other beings, so that they too may become pure and calm and concentrated and given to the higher life.

That is why Swamiji (Vivekananda) taught, "Immediately after sitting for meditation send thoughts of love South, East, North, West, to all creatures. You will find this immensely helpful."

As I said, during all our prayers we should also pray for the good of others. This sort of prayer, if done with a certain amount of concentration, brings to us in a general way a feeling of love for our fellow-beings who are struggling for the Higher Life and passing through great anguish and difficulties. The expansion of the soul is very essential for truly calming the mind and concentrating it on Divine things.

There are some people who find rhythmic breathing very helpful. Mind and breath are always inter-related and always act on each other. While doing Pranayama the proportion should be 1: 4: 2, but mere breath is not enough. If it were so, the football bladder would be the

greatest of all Yogis of the world. Along with this breath we must have the intense thought of overwhelming purity. "Everything is purity. I myself am purity, I am purity." Give strong suggestions to your mind. Inhale purity, exhale purity, fill yourself with purity. Inhale calmness, exhale calmness, fill yourself wholly with calmness. Inhale peace, exhale peace, fill yourself wholly with peace. Inhale peace, exhale all mental disturbance. Inhale dispassion and renunciation, exhale all attachment, passion and desire. Inhale purity, exhale all that is impure in your body and your mind. Inhale strength, exhale all weakness and fear. Go on giving these intense suggestions to your mind again and again before coming to your real practices.

## V

What next? After this the thought of the Divine must be taken up. Where to think of the Divine? Where to have the centre of one's consciousness? Either in the head or in the heart. These two centres are safe for everybody. Never should a centre below the heart be taken. Here instructions can be imparted only to individuals, because they differ from one another, but both head and heart are always safe. If we do not consciously raise the nervous current at least up the level corresponding, more or less, to the place of the physical heart, no spiritual meditation becomes possible. This conscious raising of one's nervous currents leads one beyond all sensual temptations and establishes one firmly in morals and ethical culture. For very dry and over-intellectual people it is advisable to take the heart. For emotional people the

heart-centre is very dangerous and should be avoided.

Think intensely of the particular centre and imagine it to be a centre of Divine Consciousness. Have the thought that the Divine Consciousness which is within you is also outside, part and parcel of a mighty Consciousness which is undivided and indivisible.

In the beginning you may think of it as light, but really speaking what is meant is the light of Intelligence, *i.e.*, the Divine Light; and this Divine Light, which is in me, pervades at the same time the whole universe and is one, and eternally indivisible. This body of ours is like a temple of Brahman; remember, each body is like a temple of Brahman!

Having done all this, try to merge your consciousness in the Divine Consciousness as in the case of the salt-dolls getting merged in the sea. You know the parable of Sri Rama-krishna. This body-consciousness stands in the way, and as soon as we try to merge it in Divine Consciousness we get the idea that the soul is not the body.

Meditations should not be focussed on the void. There should be no creating of a void in the beginner. This is very dangerous. Meditations must have some definite, positive, spiritual content. Those who find meditation on the formless too abstract should centre their feelings on some holy form. This is very effective in two ways: it leads them away from their too personal affections and aversions and, at the same time, intensifies their feelings in a good sense, makes them more definite and leads them on to the light of the spirit. If ever any picture of any

person you used to love or to hate troubles you, set a very vivid picture of the holy form you have chosen as your Ishtam, against that picture and the feeling you have for your Ishtam against the feeling you have for that person, be it affection or aversion. Vivid pictures and memories must be counteracted by vivid pictures, strong feelings by stronger and purer feelings.

There is too little attempt at sublimation. We must learn to think in terms of the soul. Never stress the body-aspect. Never think of yourself as a man or a woman. It is very necessary and very helpful to deny the body as much as possible. Sublimation is of the greatest importance. Think intensely, "I am not a man, I am not a woman. I am not even a human being."

Repeat all these grand passages from Sankara's works. He says:

"I am neither a human being, nor a god, nor a demi-god. I am neither a Brahmin, nor a Kshatriya, nor a Vaisya, nor a Sudra. I am neither a student nor a householder nor a forest-dweller nor a monk. I am the Self, the infinite Consciousness.

"I am neither the mind nor the intellect, nor the ego, nor the mind-stuff. I am neither the senses of hearing, taste, smell, touch or sight, nor am I earth, fire or air. I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. I am the Self, I am the Self.

"I am neither male nor female nor neuter. I am the Beneficent Being, the Light Supreme."

Just blast this rotten personality with these grand passages from Sankara by bombarding it with them at the time of meditation. It must

be blasted, and if it does not go, nothing can be achieved.

Go on repeating sincerely "I am He, I am He."

"I am neither the body nor the senses, neither the mind, nor the ego, neither the vital energy nor the intellect. Husband, wife, child, wealth or prosperity are free from me. I am the Witness, the Eternal Indwelling Spirit, the Being Beneficent."

"I am the light of the Atman, the Light that is inside, the Light that is outside, the Light that is the inner Self. I am the Supreme Being, the Light of lights, the Light self-existent."

All these ideas are always associated with Mahadeva (Shiva) the Great White God of Renunciation, of Purity, of Dispassion, Who has always been the Ultimate Ideal of spiritual men in India.

"I am the Being Resplendent, and none else. I am Brahman, not subject to misery. I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, eternally free by nature." (Sankara)

And then there is the beautiful prayer in the Upanishads:

"May my mind become pure. May I be free from impurity and evil. May my soul become pure. May I be free from impurity and evil. May I realize myself as the Light Divine."

## VI

Different forms of meditation without human form may also be practised:

(1) The aspirant imagines he is a fish swimming in the one undivided and eternally indivisible ocean of Existence—Knowledge—Bliss, without any obstruction whatsoever.

(2) The aspirant imagines he is a bird flying in the infinite sky without anything to stand in its way anywhere.

(3) The aspirant is like a full pot immersed in water. Water inside and outside.

(4) The aspirant is like an empty pot floating in ether, ether inside and outside.

(5) The aspirant imagines himself to be a point of self-conscious light immersed in the one indivisible Ocean of Light.

You identify yourself with the point of light, then you feel it to be part of an infinite sphere of light, and after that everything becomes just light everywhere. Nothing but light is left. Either make this point of light expand or merge it or let it move wherever it goes, because wherever it goes, there is the one infinite light. Try to expand during the time of your meditation. Keep your body-consciousness hanging on a peg, as it were, at least for a time. Thus you raise counter-currents against all your false conceptions and feelings which lie at the root of all your troubles. All such ideas as, 'I am So-and-So, I am a husband, a wife, a child, a lover, etc.' come from this mistaken identification with what is non-self. Really speaking, worldly love is nothing very grand. Association with others in bodies is nothing very fine. Learn to be realistic.

If one follows such a path, it is just like being a yeast-cell which goes on dividing and dividing itself, but never becomes big. The impulse of creation remains. It is the same impulse which leads to sex and physical creation on the animal plane that leads us to the highest on the

spiritual plane. The man, forgetting the real background of his manhood, goes and associates with the bubble of a woman-form, feeling himself to be a man-bubble. So bubbles merrily associate with bubbles. Yeast-cells go on dividing themselves eternally and never become big.

All these relations based on the body are bosh and nonsense. "O, I have been longing for you all my life. You are the star of my life." All nonsense! Afterwards, when all is over, when your body is satiated with enjoyment, each goes again his own way. Inwardly we all remain strangers, however hard we may try to deceive ourselves on this point. Never can our void be filled by a man-bubble or a woman-bubble,

nor by any bubble-star, by anyone who has always been "my life." All this sounds very grand and romantic, but there is no ultimate truth in it. To the child, the dolls are something very real. It loves them and caresses them and for a time feels very happy in the company of its dolls. Then, one day, it has lost all interest in them and sees them merely as absurd-looking, shabby dolls, hardly being able to understand how it could have cared for them so much. This happens to the grown-up man-child or woman-child also, sooner or later, after many lives, or in this life. But to all this awakening comes one day, and in the beginning this means terrible pain and misery.

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE BHAGAVATA

BY SWAMI JACADISWARANANDA

[To use a simile borrowed from the confectioner, it may be said that the *Bhagavata* is a sweet preparation fried in the Ghee of Knowledge and soaked in the syrup of Devotion. The writer of the following paragraphs endeavours to remove the misconception that it is exclusively a work of Devotion.—The Editors.]

SRIMAD BHAGAVATA is well known as a great classic of Devotion or Bhakti, and to the Vaishnavas it is a scripture of supreme authority. However, this grand Purana is equally important as a work expounding Divine Knowledge also in an emphatic manner, which fact is often overlooked by many who value it only as an excellent devotional work. It is stated in the *Bhagavata* itself (XII: 7.24) that it is one of the eighteen Puranas; and it is an established fact that the Puranas are only an illustrated explanation of the truths taught in the Vedas. Just as there is a graduated

syllabus in any course of study, in religion too, there are scriptures suitable to the needs of various aspirants. All are not competent to study all the scriptures because they are intended for different types of seekers. Those who are barred from the study of the Vedas, therefore, find a supreme scripture in the *Bhagavata*, to understand the same lessons of Bhakti and Jnana taught in the Vedas, set forth at length with narrations, discourses, stories, hymns and such other aids to meet the requirements of such seekers. It naturally follows that the *Bhagavata* is not merely a scripture

of devotion, however elaborate a treatment that aspect of religion may have received in it.

The above thesis is sufficiently substantiated by the evidences found in the *Bhagavata* itself. In the very first chapter of *Bhagavata* it is described as a luscious fruit fallen from the wish-yielding tree of the Vedas, *Nigmakalpataru*. In the tenth Book, which is a dissertation on *Prema-tattva*, (the nature of Divine Love), there is towards the close the section called *Veda-Stuti*, which is considered to be the hymn sung by the embodied Vedas, and which presents the essence of the Upanishads or the crux of the Veda. Again, to any careful reader the identity of ideas, phrases and whole passages of *Bhagavata* with those of the Upanishads is patent throughout. For instance, *Mundakopanishad* II: 2.8 and *Bhagavata* XI: 20.30 are nearly the same. The verses in *Bhagavata* VIII: 1.9 to 16 are called *Mantropanishad* in the next verse itself; and verse 10 there is almost a quotation of the first verse of the *Isavasyopanishad*. The famous allegory of the Birds of golden plumage occurring in *Mundakopanishad* III: 1-2 is reproduced in the *Bhagavata* XI: 11. 6-7. Many more submerged quotations from the Upanishads may be easily detected in the *Bhagavata*, with only slight difference in the wording. There is also a tradition that the *Bhagavata* embodies a metrical commentary of the *Brahmasutras*. The earliest commentary available on the *Bhagavata* is by Sridharaswami who has explained the verses from the non-dualistic viewpoint. Jivagoswami, Visvanathachakravarti and others who commented upon it after him,

from the purely devotional viewpoint, were indebted to him more or less. It is therefore fairly clear that the claim of the *Bhagavata* to represent the Upanishadic ideas of knowledge is beyond all criticism.

Another important point deserves our attention in this connection. In the colophon attached to each chapter of the *Bhagavata* in some editions the work is designated also as *Paramahamsya-samhita*, a work for the *Paramahamsas*. It helps the aspirant to attain the state of *Paramahamsa* or a Knower of God, i.e., a *Jnani*. This is aptly so, because we meet in almost every part of the book dispassion for the world, renunciation and disinterested love of God taught repeatedly, in the most forceful manner. The incident which occasioned the recital of *Bhagavata* itself is a circumstance highly powerful to inspire the spirit of dispassion and renunciation; for, Sri Suka, the prince among Sannyasins or world-renouncing *Jnanis*, was the teacher and *Parikshit*, condemned by a curse to die within a period of a week, was the pupil to receive the instructions imparted. Nothing less than the highest goal of man conceived as the highest devotion, *Para-Bhakti*, or highest Knowledge can be worthy of treatment in a work engendered by such a crisis. Because pure knowledge and pure devotion as Sri Ramakrishna taught by word and example are the same.

The opening verse of the *Bhagavata* embodies the second Sutra of the *Brahmasutra*, and, at least according to the *Advaitins* (non-dualists), the verse is supposed to contain all the salient features of the *Advaitic* system, chief of which is the reference

to the fact that the universe is an appearance on the background of the Supreme Truth (yatra trisargo mrisha). It is an accepted fact borne out by a number of examples that the theme indicated at the very outset of a work, and with which it concludes, must be the main purport of the whole work. So we find again in *Bhagavata* XI: 5.2-12 which is the very close of the dialogue between Sri Suka and Parikshit, the same idea clearly expounded. Says Suka: "O king, give up this notion, fit only for a brute, that you will die; you are not born from nowhere and you will not perish as your body will. Like the fire that is apart from objects it consumes, you are other than the body which obeys the law of growth and decay. A man may dream of his own beheading; so also he may witness the death of his body. The soul is therefore unborn and undying by nature. At the breaking of a pot, the space enclosed by it merges into undivided space; similarly at the destruction of the body the soul merges in Brahman. Mind creates the body and its attributes, which in its turn is a product of Maya; thus from Maya and its products the Samsara is produced. The flame lasts only so long as it has association with a wick soaked in oil; the flame goes out when it is burnt up. So, too, birth is brought about by association with the body. In this conjunction between Atman and body the Atman does not perish at the destruction of the body. It is self-luminous, distinct from the subtle and the gross universe, changeless, all-pervading like ether and the abode of all. Enquire after the Atman by reasoning and by meditation upon the Divine.

Takshaka, the Serpent, cannot harm you. Realising that "I am Brahman, the supreme abode and the highest goal to be attained," and merging in the partless Brahman, you will not perceive the biting Takshaka, your own body and the whole universe separate from the Atman which you yourself are." Thus in the view of Paramahamsa Sukadeva Atmajnana or realisation of the Self is the cure for all sorrows and suffering as well as for all fears and frailties. As shown above, the opening and closing of the *Bhagavata* strikes the same note. Is this not the same as what is taught in the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad-gita*?

In the *Bhagavad-gita* and in the eleventh Book of the *Bhagavata* the path leading the aspirant to perfection is laid out by the great Teacher Sri Krishna. In both these works, although the persons who are instructed are two, namely, Arjuna and Uddhava, the teacher and the teachings are exactly the same. This is amply evident from the contents of the two books themselves. Moreover, it is not at all likely that the same teacher has two entirely different doctrines on a subject of such great importance to be taught in two places, although there may be variations of emphasis. The paths of Knowledge, of Devotion and of Yoga are met with in both the scriptures. In *Bhagavata* XI: 13 Lord Krishna admits paths other than that of Devotion for the attainment of the goal. The three-fold Yoga taught in the *Gita* is what we find in the *Bhagavata* also. "In order to help men to realise liberation," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna in *Bhagavata* XI: 20.6 *et seq.*

" I have inculcated three methods, i.e., Jnana, Karma and Bhakti. Of these, knowledge or Jnana is for those Sanyasins who are disgusted with Work and have renounced it. Those who are still seeking the fulfilment of desires have the path of Work. But the man who by chance has contracted faith in the stories about the Lord and who is neither disgusted with, nor grossly attached to, work has in the path of Devotion the way to Success."

The *Bhagavata* in one place definitely points out that a man should dispense with the sacred Books at the dawn of spiritual experience, as a peasant throws away the stalks after storing the corn. The idea is echoed in the *Gita*.

In the eleventh Book where the Avadhuta describes how and what he was taught by his Gurus, he mentions that he learned from the first and finest of the primordial elements, ether, the trait of the omnipresent Atman, which runs as a substratum through all movable and immovable things. The Akasa being indivisible and all-pervasive is a fit illustration to give a conception of the Atman.

A psychological study of the Madhurabhava and its supreme state called Mahabhava reveals certain points which have not attracted sufficient attention. According to Sri Viswanathachakravarti, an accepted authority on Bhakti philosophy, Mahabhava is that state of intense devotion wherein established a devotee considers that all the happiness of the Crores of worlds is not even a fragment of the joy of divine union. The happiness of this world or the next or of any world there may be, is simply nothing in compa-

rison with Divine bliss. To a saint in the state of Mahabhava the pain caused by the bite of all the snakes and scorpions that ever existed can never equal the burning pang of separation from God. What is the psychological relation between God and the devotee when his devotion is so deep and intense? The Gopis hungered and thirsted for union with Sri Krishna as all devotees do for their chosen Ideals. This means that love implies essential unity and spiritual identity between the lover and the beloved. What one is not, one never desires to become. "Like is known only by the like," says Porphyry, the mystic philosopher. "Simple people," remarks the great German mystic, Eckehart, "conceive that we are to see God as if He stood on that side and we on this. It is not so. God and I are one in the act of my perceiving Him." When love reaches its acme, man and God are unified and identified. In other words, man becomes spiritually God. It is a psychological fact that the human mind cannot think two things at a time. Extreme rapidity of the succession of mental acts, i.e., thoughts, deludes one into thinking that thoughts are simultaneous. Mind is characterised by the temporal order of succession, not by the spatial order of simultaneity.

Now, in Bhakti the idea of 'I' is totally obliterated and that of 'you' (God) takes possession of mind. The thoughts of 'I' and 'you' cannot together exist in the mind. Deeper the devotion, lesser 'I' and more 'you' in the mind. Annihilation of individuality is followed by the divine fulfilment. The fundamental teaching of Rasalila or Madhurabhava is

that, in order to realise God, an aspirant must cultivate the divine madness like a Gopi. That Divine union born of love aims at eventual identity is a truth that derives corroboration from the Rasapanchadhyaya of the Bhagavata. When the divine emotions were highest the Gopis were so much absorbed in the thoughts of God Krishna that they thought themselves to be Krishnas, nay more. Their bodies too were moulded into the likenesses of Krishna. Thoughts that dominate the mind influence the body as well; for it is the mind, says Hindu Philosophy, that creates and colours the body.

In *Bhagavata* XI: 14 are set forth the methods of personal and impersonal meditations. Krishna teaches therein that first of all concentration should be practised on one part of

the Divine Form and then it should be distributed all over it. In the higher stage of meditation one should think less of the form and more of the divine attributes, and when the highest stage is attained, meditation culminates in Samadhi in which the meditator loses his own identity in God like light united with light. This, therefore, is the verdict of the *Bhagavata*: As light united with light becomes one, so man absorbed in God becomes God. Rightly observes Bernard Bosanquet in his *What Religion is* that what is united with the Eternal becomes Eternal. Bhakti should never antagonise Jnana and *vice versa*. They are twins and are wedded to the same destiny. According to mentality one chooses one; the other, another. The *Bhagavata* is as great a classic of Bhakti as of Jnana. Both are taught in it.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Indian Realism:** By Juddhanath Sinha, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, Mercat College: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London. Pages xvi + 277. Price 10s. 6d.

As stated by the author in the Preface, "This book is an attempt at a reconstruction of the Yogacara *Vijnanavada* (Subjective Idealism), and an exhaustive criticism of all the different schools of Indian Realism." In the first chapter we have an exposition of *Vijnanavada* based on the accounts of Madhava, Santarakshita and Kamalasila. The rest of the book is taken up with a criticism of Subjective Idealism. Beginning with the Sautrantika realism, we pass in review the Jaina, Sankhya-yoga, Mimamsaka, and Nyaya-Vaisesika schools of realism. In the last chapter is given a criticism of Subjective Idealism by the schools of Vedanta.

The main thesis of Subjective Idealism is that external objects do not exist, that mind and its modifications alone are real. There

is nothing extra-mental. Everything is not only mind-dependent but also mind-constituted. Cognition alone is real; and there is no object of cognition other than the cognition itself. The various schools of Realism aim at refuting this metaphysical theory. There is an external world independent of mind. Experiencing makes no difference to the facts experienced. The objects are *out there*, real and independent. They are not mental fictions. Sankara's Advaita also criticises Subjective Idealism, but for quite different reasons. The Yogacara denies empirical reality to the external world; but that is wrong. The mind is as much a fiction as the object. In the relative world of existence there cannot be a subject without an object. There are, however, schools of Advaita bordering on Subjectivism; but they are not seriously regarded.

Dr. Sinha's work is masterly. The presentation of the various views is lucid. It appears to us, however, that the title of the

book might have been more apt. The book does not expound the schools of Indian Realism directly. It is throughout a *Critique of Vijnanavada*. Some of the arguments urged by the Realists are repeated in almost every chapter; and the exposition of the Yogacara Idealism is given in each chapter (though from different sources and from the points of view of different schools of realism). On the whole, the plan is well conceived and well executed. In simple and intelligible language Dr. Sinha reveals to us what has been said by many great thinkers in India. By quoting parallel passages from western philosophers he also shows how philosophy has no boundaries; modes of thinking are the same everywhere. The work under review is a valuable addition to the books in English on Indian Philosophy. And it is in keeping with the Time-Spirit—the challenge of Realism to Idealistic ways of thinking.

Dr. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, M.A., PH.D.

**Sri Ramakrishna Kavyalahari (Bengali):**  
By Swami Shyamananda, Rangoon, Burma.  
Pages 824. Price Rs. 2-12-0.

This new book in Bengali is a metrical attempt at the biography of Sri Ramakrishna. The writer has taken advantage of most of the authentic materials available in the preparation of this life-history. In many places, of course, the book has halting metre, limping rhyme and faulty diction. But these do not in any way reduce the value of the book. As Rabindranath Tagore puts it in the foreword of the book, "Its true value consists in simple devotion." No doubt this appeal of devotion will enter straight into the hearts of the masses of Bengal for whom it is really meant, and the book will have an abiding formative influence on their character. The book is nicely got-up and an index greatly enhances the utility of the book.

P.C.

**Who am I: By Sri Ramana Maharishi,**  
Published by Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai, S. India. Pages 36. Price As. 2.

This small brochure is the fourth edition of the book. This proves the merit and the usefulness of the book. It presents a few Vedantic thoughts in an unassuming and unembellished form. As such it has a direct appeal to the heart.

We hope the book will be helpful to the disciples of the Maharishi, who obviously follow the path of Knowledge, like their master. The book is nicely printed and got-up and contains a picture of the Maharishi and a translation of a poem by him on the easy accessibility to God through Knowledge.

P.C.

**Truth, A Sati's Message, and other poems:**  
Written and published by K. S. Seshagiri,  
B.A., Mylapore, Madras. Price As. 3.

The book under review contains seven verses dealing with different topics of religious interest. Sentiments expressed in them are lofty and noble and it is hoped that they will find a place in the discerning hearts.

P.C.

**Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti:** By Y. Subrahmanyam Sarma. Published by the Adhyatma Prakash Karyalaya, Holcnarsipur, Mysore Ry. Pages 26.

The path of Devotion is said to be the easiest path and has perhaps the largest number of adherents among the religious seekers. But it cannot be gainsaid that with most of them, it is a sentimental outburst, an effusion of emotion—a momentary effervescence of feeling—which, though elevates for a time, really degenerates in the end. It is for the breaking of such indisciplined and untrained emotion that a scientific treatise on Bhakti is necessary. Narada Bhakti Sutra is one such and the best. Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of the modern era, prescribes: In Kaliyuga, Bhakti of Narada is the way. But the original being in Sanskrit, the present edition of the text, together with a translation and topical headings, will be helpful to people whose knowledge of Sanskrit is little or nil. The translation is lucid and faithful. The foot-notes are illuminating and useful. We hope this book will be widely made use of.—P.C.

**The Battle of China or the Day of a Chinese Girl:** By Dr. K. R. Menon, Ph.D. Printed and published by the School of Printing, Printers' Association, Cecil Street, Singapore. Pages 99. Price \$1.00 or 2sh. 6d.

Herein in sweet and easy-flowing verses, the young poet Dr. Menon honours the self-denying effort of a Chinese girl of Singapore, who offered herself as a prize in the lottery for raising funds for the

ill-starred victims of Japanese aggression in China. He has also paid glowing tribute to the gallantry of Chinese soldiers and sustained patriotism of the Chinese people in such a protracted struggle for national freedom.

The intrinsic merit of the book makes it a delightful study. The sale-proceeds of this book will go to the Red-Cross fund of China. This laudable object is a further incentive to the purchase of the book, besides the lofty sentiments contained therein and fine printing and decent get-up.—N.C.

**The Great Cremation Ground:** *By Elizabeth Sharpe. Published by Luzac & Co., London.*

The book under review is said to be a critical dissertation on Indian philosophy. But in reality it deals with the Upanishads and Jaina philosophy only. The book has been given a strange name—meaning Mahasmasana, the Great Cremation Ground. The motive in the choice of such a peculiar name is not very far to seek. The Upanishadic philosophy, according to the writer, is not original or logical, but a hotch-potch of some older and more influential school of thought. As such it is barren and desolate like a cremation ground. But, one wonders how, if this assumption is correct, does the authoress reconcile the inclusion of Jaina system which she unequivocally praises, into the body of the same work? Of course this unusual high colour used for the painting of Jainism, betrays a motive for acquiring a darker hue for the Upanishadic silhouette. But really this book is neither critical, nor a dissertation, nor on the whole of Indian philosophy. It is a puny treatise where ideas from various Upanishads have been culled bereft of contextual setting; misinterpreted to a greater or less degree, and addled into a stinking hotch-potch. Her linking up of Semitic eucharist doctrine with the Vedic and post-Vedic sacrifices, her comparison of Upanishadic reply to the question: what is truth, with that of Christ; her strange thesis, putting forward the state of superconscious as absence of consciousness and many others betray a lack of sensible understanding, to say the least. The authoress in conclusion says that the Upanishadic philosophy being pessimistic is no good philosophy, for 'philosophy must of necessity be optimism of

the truest and highest order.' But if philosophy be a search after truth and truth be pessimistic, how can it be made into a bubbling optimism without tampering with truth? After all, truth, and therefore philosophy, cannot be made to order. Of course we do not admit that the Upanishadic philosophy is pessimistic. It is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but a factual representation of truth. Our authoress remarks that the philosophy of the Upanishads may well please the heart of a Schopenhauer as he was a pessimist. But what does she say to a Max Muller, a James or a Deussen? Well might Schopenhauer have remarked for the jibe hurled at him and the Upanishads, "When a head and a book come into collision, and one sounds hollow, is it always the book?"—quoting for the second time the witty remarks of Lichtenberger.

P.C.

**Conquest of Sorrow:** *By Swami Sacchidananda, Published by K. L. Basu, 43, Badan Roy Lane, Beliaghata, Calcutta.*

"Verbal Consolation," says the author, "has but a transient effect," but to our mind it seems that bookish consolation has also no better chance. For consolation, we must always have to fall back upon the old healer Mr. Time. But no real consolation can be achieved unless and until we have transcended the limitations that cause sorrow. And here the author of the book under review points to the real direction by laying down the principles of spiritual practices. We hope the book will be helpful if people take this unmistakable hint.

P.C.

**What is Hinduism:** *By D. S. Sarma, M.A., Printed by G. S. Press, Mount Road, Madras, Pages, 136.*

Hinduism is not a religion, but, as has been aptly remarked by Mr. Sarma, a League of religions, not always friendly in their outlook; sometimes in open hostility to one another. And half a century ago who could have thought about a single treatise bringing under a generalised survey the whole motley crowd? But thanks to the era ushered in by the twin personality of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, a common meeting ground has been discovered, not on a convenient and artificial eclecticism but on an extension of our heart, and a broad-

ening of our understanding. Taking his stand on this sure ground Mr. Sarma presents us with his brilliant survey of Hinduism. He studies the problem from the standpoint of the Scriptures, Rituals, Ethics, Sadhanas and Philosophy. And his disquisition is well-proportioned, well-thought-out and well-written. It will be a handy compendium on Hinduism for our young hopefuls whose god-less education leaves them as blind to the glories of soul as the mole, in spite of all the lights of scientific and artistic variety focussed on their precious heads. It will be of much use to the wider public, as well, who have neither the time nor the inclination to have recourse to the source books. An index will greatly enhance the value of the book.

P.C.

*The Buddhist Way of Life: a booklet by Devapriya Valisinha, General Secretary, Maha Bodhi Society, calcutta. Price As. 2.*

This is an excellent little book which contains in a nutshell the essence of the Buddhist Doctrine. Mr. Valisinha possesses the happy faculty of expressing much in a few words,—an art which many exponents of the Dharma might well try to cultivate.

The English is clear and written in a free and easy style, which gives the little publication a double value. College students, while getting well acquainted with the principles of Buddhism in reading these nineteen pages, will, at the same time, find here a great help in learning to express themselves in writing their essays.

A.G.A.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Swami Abhedananda's Diary

The following paragraphs are from the Diary of Swami Abhedananda recorded while he was in America working as a Hindu Missionary:—

On my arrival at Boston Station, Dr. Lewis Janes came to meet me and took me to Mrs. Ole Bull's studio house in Cambridge, Mass., in pouring rain. Dr. Janes, who was the President of Brooklyn Ethical Society and Director of Cambridge Religious Conferences, invited me to be one of the speakers before the Free Religious Association of Boston. He was living in Mrs. Ole Bull's studio house, where I was accommodated as his guest.

On May 26th it rained all day and night. I took a stroll in the afternoon with Dr. Janes, who showed me some places of interest in Cambridge.

On the morning of May 27th I spoke before the Free Religious Association on the Vedanta Philosophy. Col. Higginson was the president who introduced me to the audience as the accredited teacher from India, on whom had fallen the mantle of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. In the evening I dined with Dr. Janes and after supper I spoke in the evening festival of the Free Religious Association.

On May 28th Dr. Janes took me to the Harvard University where I met Prof. Royce, who taught idealistic philosophy, and Prof. William James, the noted psychologist and pragmatist. As it was the last day of the session of the University before summer vacation, I was allowed to sit in their class rooms and listen to their last lectures in which they summed up the lessons of the whole season. It was extremely interesting to me. At first I heard Prof. Royce and after an hour heard Prof. James. Seeing us in the midst of the audience Prof. James began to refute in his discourse the arguments in favour of unity, of which I took notes.

Afterwards he asked me to speak on "Unity," when I said it had already been announced that, on the following Sunday, I was going to address a meeting on "Scriptures, what Do They Teach?" at Mrs. Ole Bull's house before the members of the Cambridge conference. But I would be delighted to speak on "Unity," if he would kindly attend my lecture. He agreed to be present and so in compliance with his request I changed the subject and announced that I would speak on "Unity in Variety" instead.

Then I went with Dr. Janes to see Boston Public Library, State House, Com-

mon's Park and other places of interest in Boston.

On May 29th I went with Dr. Janes in the morning to Mt. Auburn cemetery where the remains of the celebrated Bostonians were interred. We walked up to the top of the tower from where we got a beautiful view of the surrounding country.

In the afternoon I delivered my lecture on "Unity in Variety" at Mrs. Ole Bull's house. Dr. Janes presided. Prof. William James and Prof. Lanman, the great Sanskrit scholar, who afterwards edited Whitney's translation of the Atharva Veda, were among the audience. It was a very learned lecture which the audience listened to with rapt attention. In my discourse I brought out Prof. James' points against unity and logically showed how fallacious they were.

Dr. Janes announced, after my lecture was over, that the Swami would be glad to answer questions. Prof. James had his students with him sitting by his side. He then whispered to them to ask his own questions, which I answered without any hesitation. After I had answered several questions of his students, Dr. Janes remarked, "Swamiji will be very happy if Prof. James puts questions to him directly." To this Prof. James replied that it was not the place for him to ask questions. I supposed that the Professor was rather afraid lest he should be refuted in his arguments in the presence of his students.

At the close of the meeting Prof. James shook hands with me and congratulated me for my lucid and logical discourse on the subject of Unity and invited me to come to lunch with him in his house next afternoon. I accepted the invitation and thanked him for coming to my lecture.

In the evening I went with Mrs. Brocklesby to her house in Newton, a beautiful suburban town near Boston, and spent the night there as her guest.

On May 30th I returned from Newton to Cambridge and went with Dr. and Mrs. Janes to hear Prof. Shaler, the author of the scientific book entitled "Matter, Motion and Mind," at the Memorial Hall. Then went with Dr. Janes to lunch with Prof. William James in his house. There were Prof. Royce, Prof. Lanman and Prof. Shaler with us at the table. After

lunch, Prof. James started a discussion against unity with me because he believed in the plurality of the infinite and was against the idea of the unity of the ultimate truth of the universe. I on the other hand supported unity (Advaitavada) and refuted his pluralistic arguments. The discussion lasted for four hours, in which Prof. Royce, Prof. Lanman, Prof. Shaler and Dr. Janes supported my arguments against Prof. James, who was at last convinced that the Vedantic point of unity of Brahman, the ultimate Truth, was unassailable. Dr. Janes remarked to me after the discussion was over that he never heard such a learned and wonderful discussion before and that he wished that there were a stenographer to take the whole discussion in shorthand writing.

Then Prof. Lanman invited me with Dr. Janes to his house where we spent the whole afternoon. Prof. Lanman showed me his private library in which were all the Vedas and Sanskrit scriptures, philosophy, Kavyas in Sanskrit and works of Sankaracharya, etc.—a rare collection which he collected from India and other countries. He showed me the Vedanta Sutras with Sankara's commentary (Bombay edition) in three volumes, and asked me whether I read them and could understand Sankara Bhashya. I answered in the affirmative. Thereupon he said putting his fore-finger on his head, "My brain cannot understand it." To this I replied, "You needed a Guru, a preceptor, who would have given you the key to open the secret door of your Buddhi, the faculty of understanding, to realise the spiritual oneness of Vedanta." The learned Professor bowed to me saying: "You were lucky to find such a Guru."

In the course of our conversation when I repeated the Sanskrit sloka:

Ananta-sastram bahu veditavyam  
Alpas cha kalo bahavas cha vighnayam  
Yat sarabhatam tad upasanyayam  
Hamso yatha kshiram iva ambu-  
misram.

Prof. Lanman asked me how it was possible for a swan to drink the milk and leave the water as it was mentioned in that verse; he could not understand this. I explained that some aquatic birds possess some kind of acid in their mouth which curdles the milk there. Then it would be easy for the bird to swallow the

curd of the milk without drinking the water. Prof. Lanman was very pleased to hear my explanation and said that it had never occurred to him. How true and wonderful was the illustration! The Professor in his article on "The milk-drinking Hamsas of Sanskrit poetry," on June 7, 1898, says: "Now by a singular coincidence, Swami Abhedananda calling at my study last week while my mind was upon the subject of this essay....had explained the Hamsa-fable....by saying that there was a secretion in the bird's mouth which coagulated the milky part of the mixture (somewhat after the fashion of rennet), so that the resulting curdy portions became easily separable....The Swami's theory seems to be essentially like that of Sayana." From that day Prof. Lanman became a good friend to me and attended my lectures in Boston and later on became an Honorary member of the Vedanta Society of New York after I had organized it and had it incorporated.

—From *Viveka Vani*.

**Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center  
of New York Acquires  
Permanent Home**

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, after six years of successful activity at 200 West 57th Street, New York City, has recently moved to its new quarters at 17 East 94th Street. The building, a five-storey grey sandstone house, is located in one of the most aristocratic and fashionable parts of the city, just a few doors from Fifth Avenue. It fills a long-felt want of this organisation for a larger and more permanent home, where students and devotees may gather.

Founded by Swami Nikhilananda in 1933, at the insistent request of a number of friends and followers of Vedanta, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center had rapidly outgrown its old quarters. A larger chapel, library and reading-room space, and ampler apartments for the Swami were sorely needed for some time past. Several years ago, a building fund was inaugurated, and through the generosity of the students sufficient funds were donated to make possible the beginning of negotiations for a house in some less congested part of the city. By the grace of the Lord, a most suitable house was finally located.

After extensive repairs and alterations, it was made ready for occupancy about August 1, 1939.

The five floors are arranged as follows: The basement, with separate door to the street, is used for the housekeeper's quarters. Beneath it is a large cellar. On the first floor is the beautiful main chapel, occupying the entire width and almost the entire length of the building, except for a small entrance hall and book-room in front. The chapel contains shrines for Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda, together with pictures of Christ and Buddha. On the second floor are the library for members, and the Swami's dining-room. Above this, on the third floor, are the Swami's study, bed-room, and private chapel. The top floor contains guest-rooms for visiting Swamis.

It is certain that the new building will greatly help not only the extension but also the intensity of the Center's activities. No effort has been spared to make this a fitting center for the wider dissemination of the universal gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Arrangements are being made for the daily meditation of the students. Members of the Center will meet a number of times every week in the library, and will be given facilities for reading magazines and books from India, seeing magic-lantern slides and moving pictures, and developing a healthy social life.

The Swami has also been arranging to start an Indo-American Association in connection with the Center, where lectures will be delivered by eminent Indian and American scholars on spiritual and cultural subjects. He has already received assurances from several American scholars of their sympathy with the aims of this organization.

The new house will further help the Swami to fulfill one of his dreams, namely, to bring young monks of the Ramakrishna Order to this country, from time to time, and train them in one of the leading universities of the city. Such training will give them far better equipment for work in East and West alike, and will aid in a practical manner in the consummation of Swami Vivekananda's ideal of understanding between the peoples of the Orient and the Occident.

### The Vedanta Work in Seattle, U.S.A.

Seattle is the premier city of the North-west coast of the United States of America and a gateway to the Orient. Having a cosmopolitan population it is a good field for the spread of the Universal teachings of Vedanta. Swami Vividishananda went to this city and gave a series of lectures in September, 1938. The response was more than satisfactory. The Swami was requested by many of the audience to establish a permanent Center. Since then the Swami continued his work there delivering lectures every Sunday, dealing with the various aspects of Hindu Philosophy and Indian Culture in general. Feeling the demand for a serious study of original texts of Hindu Scriptures, a group was formed in October and two to three weekly classes were held. In these classes lessons on Rajayoga and Karmayoga also were given.

As people came to know more about the Swami and the great message he was endeavouring to promulgate, he was asked to fill several outside lecture engagements. In Everett, a neighbouring town, about thirty miles from Seattle, the Swami gave four lectures. The small town mustered strong to hear the Swami and were greatly impressed. On invitation, the Swami continued his work there for two months by paying a flying visit once a week. Besides, the Swami spoke on "Women of India" under the auspices of Phi Delta Theta Mothers' Club one afternoon, which was highly appreciated. The Swami on another occasion spoke at the Women's City Club, an influential women's organisation of the city, on "India and Her People" and illustrated the lecture by lantern slides. The lady in charge of the programme and several others from the audience complimented the Swami by saying that the talk was quite informative and interesting and that they did not have anything like this for a long time. The audience consisted exclusively of ladies and was largely attended.

Birthday anniversaries of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna were celebrated at the Swami's residence with Sanskrit chants, prayers, devotional music and discourses. For want of accommodation only members of the group and their friends could be invited. The Hindu dinner cooked by the Swami was a special

feature on Swami Vivekananda's birthday.

A public meeting was held in connection with Sri Ramakrishna's birthday at the Mayflower Hotel Hall. Besides the Swami two distinguished guests addressed the meeting and they were Mr. Z. Ying doh, Chinese Consul, and Prof. E. P. Horowitz. The hall was literally packed and many had to be turned away for want of standing space. The audience was visibly moved by the deep spiritual significance of the meeting and left with a feeling of reverence for Sri Ramakrishna, the modern Hindu prophet whose soulful message aims at bridging the gulf between the East and the West. A meeting was also held in memory of the Lord Buddha. The meeting also was well-attended.

The work started in September, 1938, as an experiment, continued till the end of June, 1939, which marked the close of the season. The work seems to be progressing. The Swami hopes to return in fall and concentrate his energies upon the small nucleus that has been formed.

### The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Batticaloa.

In the palm-fringed east coast of Lanka stands the town of Batticaloa where the Ramakrishna Mission Swamis are working silently and steadily for the making of man. Religion, which has been the central pivot of the national life of India for the past millenniums, serves as the foundation on which are being built the lives of the future hopes of Ceylon. And the atmosphere of the orphanage, known as the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home with its appendages, the Shivananda Vidyalaya and the Shivarupi and Kamalalaya, which are the residences of the Swamis and paying boarders, is surcharged with the energising influence of Ramakrishna's teachings which rest far above the narrow sectarianism, nay, far above the grudging eclecticism even, broad-based upon a principle which accepts all religions as true. As a result, Muslim inmates can use one room of the boarding house and the Buddhists the other and each can observe their respective rituals without let or hindrance. The shrine which is attached to the orphanage is open to all for offering worship, the only condition laid down being purity of both body and mind. So much for the spiritual side.

On the intellectual side, the school works up to the Senior School Certificate Examination. The school possesses well-equipped Physics and Botany laboratories and tries to impart a bias towards modern science in the hearts of the young impressionable.

On the physical side, the boys are taught to nurse the sick, to lay out a garden, plan and erect huts, keep accounts and attend to various sanitary arrangements.

Started in May 1929, the Home has done something during the period of its existence and hopes to do more with the blessings of the Lord and the continued assistance and good wishes of its friends and admirers.

**The Ramakrishna Sevashrama,  
Shyamala Tal, Himalayas, 1938.**

In the sequestered heights of the Himalayas, eleven miles from the nearest railway station, Tanakpur, is situate the Vivekananda Ashrama, not quite oblivious of the cares and worries of fellow mortals but ministering to the medical needs of the poor hill-men who inhabit the surrounding hamlets, through the medium of the sister institution, the Ramakrishna Sevashrama. Since its inception in 1914 the Sevashrama has been very helpful to the diseased and suffering, treating 34,306 patients in all. A special feature of the Sevashrama is that it treats dumb animals such as cows, buffaloes, etc.

**Number of Patients treated:**—In 1938 there were 1,635 new cases, 1,201 repeated cases and 320 cattle in the outdoor department. There were 17 indoor patients. The total number of patients was 3,263.

**Accounts:**—Total receipt during the year was Rs. 511-11-4 and balance of the previous year Rs. 196-0-11½, bringing about a total of Rs. 707-12-3½. The total expenditure was Rs. 862-1-9 leaving a minus balance of Rs. 154-5-5½.

**Needs:**—From the above accounts it is evident that the Sevashrama needs (1)

funds for its day-to-day upkeep and (2) permanent fund of not less than Rs. 20,000 for putting the institution on a sound financial basis. Its record of work for the last 24 years has been one of steady growth and everwidening utility and deserves support from the generous public.

**The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama,  
Bankipore, Patna, 1938.**

This Ashrama was started in June 1922. During its period of useful career it has tried to attend to various needs of the people—intellectual, physical and spiritual. During the period under review religious discourses and classes on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and Bhagavatam were held in different parts of the city. Private interviews were given by the Swami-in-charge for giving practical instructions in spirituality. Besides the discourses and classes, special lectures were arranged and lecturing tours were undertaken. The Ashrama conducts two free primary schools, one having fifty students and the other thirty-two. The former has been accorded recognition by the Education Department of Bihar, lately. The Ashrama maintains one Charitable Dispensary in which 8,434 patients were attended to, of which 1938 were new cases and 6,441 repeated. The Ashrama conducts one Students' Home which accommodated two students in 1938, who were provided with free boarding and lodging. The annual Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Birthday Anniversary was celebrated with due *celat* as usual. Meetings were held and about two thousand Daridra Narayanas were sumptuously fed. The consolidated balance-sheet of all the above items shows a receipt with previous years' balances of Rs. 3,710-1-4½ and an expenditure of Rs. 3,467-3-10½ leaving a closing balance of Rs. 242-13-6 only. The immediate need of the Ashrama is Rs. 200-0-0 for paying off a loan incurred for the building fund. The Ashrama also requires a suitable building for the dispensary for which Rs. 5,000 is needed. A further sum of Rs. 1,500 is required for purchasing and building a pucca road for the Ashrama.



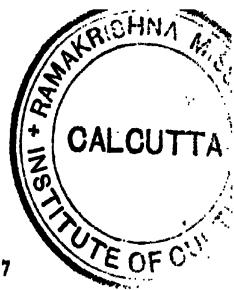
THE

# VEDANTA KESARI

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## REVERENCE TO ELDERS

Reverence to elders is considered the corner-stone of all domestic virtues among all nations. The following verses give a characteristic Indian representation of it.

तात् धर्मदर्शी भगवान् वभाषे ; पूज्यो गुह्यामपि गौरवाहीं ।  
 कायस्य कल्याणिकेतनस्य ; निभितभूतौ पितरौ दुधानाम् ॥  
 धर्मोऽप्यधर्मत्वमुपैति तेषां ; ज्ञानशुतिव्यामिलतां प्रयाति ।  
 समस्तपुण्यप्रथमावतारौ न पूजितौ यैः पितरौ सदैव ॥  
 पितरौ परमं ब्रह्म जह्नमः पुण्यसङ्गमः । कुलानि तानि धन्यानि येषां धर्मस्तदर्जनम् ॥  
 सत्योपमं नास्ति तपस्त्रिलोके ; न क्वापि हिंसासद्वशोऽस्यधर्मः ।  
 गुरुर्गीयात् न पितुः समोऽस्ति ; मातुः परं दैवतमस्ति नान्यत् ॥  
 सेवितं प्रसभभक्तिनिर्भरैः ; पादपुष्करयुगं गुरोर्न यैः ।  
 ते परं जलहृचैव केवलं ; सर्वतीर्थगमनेऽपि निष्पलाः ॥  
 आचार्यः सुकृतार्थदेशिकतया कैनाभिवन्धः सदा  
 प्राणानां जनकः कथं न जनकः पूज्यो गुह्यां गुरुः ।  
 तत्रापि क्षणगमधारणभर्तुशस्य मातुः परं  
 केनानुष्यविधानपुण्यनिचयेनासाधते निर्वृतिः ॥  
 माता महालमालिका वात्सल्यमौलिः पिता  
 तौ येषां शिरसि त्रियाय कुरुतः पादाम्बुजारोहणम् ।  
 सर्वाशापरिपूरणोदयतयस्सम्पत्काशोदया-  
 स्ते पुण्याभरणाः प्रयान्ति जगतां नित्योत्सवाः पूज्यताम् ॥  
 कल्पः सर्वजनप्रियः सततमासक्तप्रकाशोदयः  
 क्षाध्यो वासर एष यस्य जननी पूज्या प्रभातशुतिः  
 यश्चाप्य जनकस्य चण्डमहसः पादोपसेवाहृतिर्  
 लोकेऽस्मिन्नपरत्रवा तदनुगोऽसृष्टस्तमोभिः क्वचित् ॥  
 वन्दन्ते स्यविरकमेष नियतं ये धर्मशिक्षाविदः  
 पूज्यान् पूज्यगुणाः प्रणामविनयै स्तेप्राप्नुवन्नुभिरुप ।  
 दर्पणोऽदतया विशङ्कुलधिया मोहादधः पातिनां  
 उद्योगातिक्रमिणामयं स च परो लोकः सशोकः सदा ॥

पीयूषं स्वलितार्धवर्णलितालापैः शिरुर्वर्षति  
 प्रीतिं स्फीततरां मनोरथशतैर्वर्षते विनेयस्ततः  
 पश्चादुत्कट्यौवनोऽभ्यविकटाहङ्कारवादी पटु  
 दुंषुलः स्फुटकालकूटकदुकः कषां करोति व्यथाम् ।  
 वंशः स कोऽपि विपुलः कुशलानुबन्धी ; यथारूपमुचितं गुणसङ्करस्य ।  
 तत्त्वं विशुद्धचित्सूचितसत्त्वकाशं ; मुक्तामयं जगदलङ्करणं प्रसूते ॥

The blessed One gifted with the constant vision of Righteousness instructed them as follows: It is the duty of all reasonable men to serve and worship their parents who have caused their body, the home of all good and desirable ends, and who deserve respect above all. Those who fail to adore always these prime incarnations of their previous merits, their parents, will have their virtue transformed into vice, their shining erudition smudged beyond recognition. Parents must be viewed as supreme; they are the living embodiments of merit accumulated in previous births (for a virtuous soul elects its noble parents). Those families are really lucky the members of which worship their parents as a rule. No austerity can be compared with truth; no vice can outbid cruelty; no person deserves greater respect than one's own father; no god demands a superior honour than what is due to the mother. Those who are not devoted to their parents with exceeding, unfailing loyalty perform in vain pilgrimages to all holy places; their endeavour ends only in the tasting of different waters. Who can hold back reverent salutation for the preceptor who gives noble lessons and puts a man on his way to virtuous activity? Would it ever be possible to neglect the father who is the most worthy object of adoration for a son, and who has given him birth? Who, again, is fortunate enough to get that intense delight born of the merit which one might earn by paying off the debt one owes to one's mother, a moment of whose pain of travail is so unbearable? They are the unfading joy of the world and indeed demand the respect of the world—who shine in the splendour of spiritual merit which wears well with them as an ornament, who advance in far-flung glory and brilliance, and who look upon their mother as the auspicious garland carefully worn on the head and father as the diadem of flowers when their feet are in contact with the heads as they respectfully prostrate before them. The darkness of sin can never touch them—whether of this world or of the prospective one—who follow the laudable and majestic day: for the day is dear to all; it is ever intent on the manifestation of light; the splendour of dawn, the mother of the day, is always an object of worship for it; and with an unfailing solicitude, before anything else, it receives the feet (rays) of its father, the dazzling sun, for obedient service. Those excellent men educated in righteous conduct pay obeisance to worthy elders in due order by prostration at the feet and polite behaviour proper to their age and eminence; but those who are arrogantly stiff, as they are deluded, hasten to their own fall. To these that transgress the standards of noble behaviour fixed for one's relation to elders, life here and beyond is fraught with fear. The child's babblings are like nectar in the parents' ears; as it comes to the state of a boy or girl and is put to school greater joy is afforded by pondering over its bright prospects; afterwards perchance the boy turns to be an expert braggart drunk with false pride, as an effect of unbridled youthfulness; and what a painful deadly poison he proves himself to be! A great and virtuous family alone gives birth to that jewel of a son who may become an ornament to the world by being blemishless and who will give a hint of his exquisite brilliance by his pure tastes, who will be a repertory of excellences and who will be noble in conduct and sensible in behaviour.

## THE INNER REALITY \*

BEHIND the immense heavenly dome sparkling with the light of countless stars, behind the mysterious veil of darkness that enshrouds the enchanting multiplicity of the objective universe, behind the resplendent sun who reveals at dawn the glories of our wonderful planet,—the vast heaving emerald ocean, distant stretches of sparkling sand, extensive prairies splashed with clumps of waving trees, dark-green hill-forests with interstices of gray earth and gaunt promontories, serried mountains rising tier after tier in meditative stillness, glinting streams and bracing breeze—behind all this awe-inspiring Nature and behind the life that pulsates in every sentient being, the sages of India realised long, long ago by their spiritual vision an Inner Reality, the intelligent divine Principle which projects, maintains and reabsorbs the entire universe. “Verily all this is the immortal Brahman! He is everywhere, above, below, in front, at the back, upon the right, upon the left! All this world is indeed the Supreme Brahman . . . . Everything shines reflecting His glory. This whole world is illumined by His light.” (*Mundakopanishad*). Both religion and philosophy have this Reality for their central content.

Vedanta emphasises that the Essence behind man and the universe is the same Consciousness which is infinite and, therefore, eternally free. Freedom being the essence of joy, this Consciousness is Bliss absolute also. Man is lured by the ever-widening horizon of knowledge and perfection; he is palled by the fleeting and

mingled joys of the world; and he peers into the mystery around and within; because this Infinitude of bliss and intelligence is his by birthright. His aspirations are never belied and his long quest through lives will end in the realization of Truth because he is essentially That. To the materialists who count upon a pluralistic world, Reality is nothing but the sum total of finite experiences; but to the monist there is only one Inner Reality. To him this world is neither a horrible den to be shunned nor a bed of roses to be listlessly lingered on; earthly life for him is a splendid opportunity to educate his soul to its divine destiny, to be realised here and hereafter. That education consists in spiritual living and putting oneself in such a relation with the whole world as is naturally brought on by the realisation of Divinity as the one existence. Karma, reincarnation, methods of spiritual realisation, duties and stations of life, knowledge, devotion, concentration, renunciation, self-enquiry and all other details of religion take their proper place in the light of this central understanding. It is the special pride of India that here these have formed the subject of enquiry, discussion and practice on a nation-wide scale for several centuries and even today life in India is not bereft of them but only receives greater impetus through new conditions.

### I

In the following paragraphs we shall critically view how the author

\* Paul Brunton: *The Inner Reality*, Rider & Co., London. Price 12s. 6d. nett.

of the above book, recently published, appraises and presents the Inner Reality and the problems allied with it. The question is rightly put at the outset: What is God? God must be viewed, the author goes on to say, in two ways, either as the personal God or as the unoriginated impersonal God. The personal Gods are as many as there are universes, and all of them have emerged from the unconditioned ultimate Absolute Darkness which is also called ultimate Root, Creative Power, Great Void, Infinite Consciousness, Inner Reality and Over-self, identified with the Father spoken of in St. John's *Gospel*. The images which men worship are their own *ides* of God suggested by tradition, and they are therefore illusory as they are not eternally true and abiding. Such faith has come from the superstition of the past ages; the real God is "directly inside." We are to go by life, science and knowledge and not by "faded bibles or yellow parchments." We want what is scientifically true, and science has begun to perceive "that there is no room for a personal God in the universe." "Hence God must be an Infinite Force." Finally it is asserted that "God, the Sun, and Light are synonymous.....Light is the element in the material universe which is nearest to divinity." We are reminded again "that it is Light alone that is God." During recent years science has informed us with increasing confirmation that all matter is ultimately the condensation of radiant energy or Light. The author says that it is possible to convert Light into matter and matter back again into Light; and "If God be Light and if all material objects.....are nothing but condensations of that

radiant energy of Light, do you not see that God is, therefore, everywhere present?" God is the Light-substance and forms the Overself atom in each man's heart. Thus it is scientifically verifiable that God made the world out of His own Light-substance. Light is the form of God and space is His home. This 'true' concept of God is far removed from other 'barbaric notions.' And this, it is stated, is more satisfying than the theologian's notion of a God who is just a glorified human being. "You will never 'see' God otherwise than as Light." Although it is amply evident from this analysis that the description owes a heavy debt to Hindu ideas, it cannot be accepted as a true and exact representation of them. Hindu scriptures do not speak of God as Light except as symbolically. To confuse the photic experiences of mystics with the Light experimented by physicists is unwarranted. A Hindu religious aspirant must accept only after scrutiny these and similar assertions.

## II

There are six chapters in *The Inner Reality* interpreting some of the outstanding conceptions of the Bible and the Bhagavad-Gita called here 'The Scripture of the Yogis.' The Sermon on the Mount contains the kernel of the Bible and the Beatitudes embody the most significant spiritual ideas of Christianity. The nine Beatitudes are compressed into seven—which suggests the *Saptabhumikas* or 'seven planes' of Hindu philosophical works. The interpretation given to them is purely Indian and is clean of all the ideas which the Church associates with them. The "poor" are not the financially poverty-stricken, but those

who withdraw the mind from the external surroundings into the divine element behind it or whose consciousness is not dominated by the sense of possession. It is the recognition of the impermanence of the universe—the discovery that "life, the universe, human life, are nothing but a dream, a phantom, an illusion." The "peacemakers," of whom Jesus speaks, "have nothing to do with patching up the quarrels of other people." They are those who have found utter peace inside. Blessed are they that mourn, not for the dead or for possessions, but for returning to the spiritual home that is inside. Meekness consists in a temperament which combines veneration and receptivity. Hunger after righteousness means the adjustment of oneself to Truth. Mercy is taught to avoid retribution of bad, if not here, in the next life. The purity which is taught therein is taken as the quality which comes by relinquishing the personal. It results from the practice of discrimination. And when personality is released you "pass your mind into the divine Overself-atom hidden away in the human body on the right side of the physical heart." Christ symbolised the Overself as the Kingdom of Heaven which is an eternal absolute state and not an Utopian state on this material earth; it must be the same as the Absolute of the philosopher and Nirvana of the Buddhist. An orthodox or religious heaven must be an illusion; the Kingdom is the greatest mystery within the cosmic mystery. The Gospel of St. John lends itself to this view more than any other Book of the Bible and one chapter is constructed on it. The "Mystery of Jesus" is unravelled in conclusion. Some of the facts given there are un-

documented and are arbitrary. Mr. Brunton advises: "You must beware first of all of becoming captive in dogmas implanted in your mind by others. You must beware of persons who dupe themselves and deceive others by unscientific speculations which cannot prove themselves, which are wrapped in unnecessary mystery. You must refuse to give uncritical credence to them." (p. 227). But it is stated that the Sun is the heart of the Supreme Creator; that there are more intelligent beings in some other planets who feel a great compassion for those on the backward planets and that Jesus came from a star where men live an infinitely higher life and for whom it is an infinite sacrifice to come to this earth. He was only an instrument in the hands of the Sacred Four. If one is to accept these as scientifically ascertained facts, it is difficult to say what is hierological romance. The author narrates how Jesus embarked for India from Alexandria with a merchant who became his friend and reaching the south-west coast travelled slowly in India, came to Benares and to the mountain wilderness of the Himalayas on the southern side, where he stayed in a cave for some time learning Yoga and receiving training from Brahmins. He was twenty-eight at that time. We are very unlucky not to find even the least indication of the source of this valuable historical knowledge, which is so vividly presented, even in a foot-note of the book.

### III

The depth and popularity of the Gita invites interpreters every year, to many of whom the first thing to be said in that connection is that

India today does not exemplify the material-spiritual balance of existence taught by the Gita. The Gita certainly is a gospel of activism and contemplation; but one has to be very careful when the modern interpreter extols it for satisfying the needs of the present day; because he is often likely to forget that the activism of the Gita is based on participation in the Divine and not merely as a successful way of doing work. The chapters may be helpful to those who have not made any special study of the book. The chapters on "Practical Help in Yoga" and "Errors of the Spiritual Seeker" contain some useful knowledge given in a lucid manner, though not very accurately always. Karma is interpreted as destiny—a term which may be easily understood in the West. The chapter on "Psycho-spiritual Self-analysis" gives a well-reasoned exposition of the method of *Vichara* or self-scrutiny to realise the hidden Truth. This search following up the question 'Who am I?' is very widely canvassed in Indian scriptures and is specially advocated by one of her great living saints with whom the author of the book had close contact.

#### IV

A work dealing with the inner quest has to devote some space for asceticism in one form or other. A self-denying contemplative life as well as a ferocious self-torturing life may come under asceticism; but monastic life does not necessarily denote self-torture. Unwillingness to be contented with the purely animal or social level of consciousness is the first essential stage of true spirituality. True asceticism is a gymnastic of the mind. The author of *The Inner Reality* does

not advocate "a cowardly renunciation of the world;" but he strongly recommends to "place one's worldly life on the most solid of all foundations;" also according to him it is not common sense to demand complete renunciation of sex life, because that is a perfectly natural function of the body. Some amount of celibacy and a few minutes of meditation alone are enough to attain spiritual life. The most one need do is to retreat occasionally to a monastery. Running away to monasteries and solitudes is useless; you can enjoy all that nature and human ingenuity have invented. The ancient ideal of Hindu spirituality, according to him, saw nothing but evil in the world and nothing but holiness in monasteries. Defects of human character are found even in monasteries; so better they are avoided. Cold intellect and hot sex may even become the cause of uplift to the enlightened aspirant. This represents briefly the view on monasticism expressed in the book. If there is any spirituality in the world which saw that domestic life can be spiritualised, it is the Indian ideal of a Brahmana who was the spiritual head of society. Monasticism is never practised on such a large scale as to threaten the existence of society; and the ancient ideal of India was that the monk should not establish a retreat but live upon alms and wander about bringing spirituality to the door of the householder. Mr. Paul Brunton's appraisal of Hindu spirituality is sadly untrue. The disappearance of monasticism sentenced Europe to spiritual death. Corruption and abuses are found even in Governments and social institutions; does anybody therefore think of advocating a riddance of these institutions

themselves? Why then is he so much in disfavour of monasticism alone because he may have seen some corruption somewhere? Buddha and Christ and a host of holy saints were all wrong on this computation. If monastic ideals are loathsome to the modern world it is because modern man wants sense enjoyments perhaps more than the people of all past ages. As our author himself puts it in another connection, "any attempt to spiritualise materiality"—of course, we should add, without perfect moral strictness—"would end in materialising spirituality." It is all very easy to panegyris the life in the world like "blue-green lotus leaf floating on the surface," or "wandering through the materialistic civilization of the world from Moscow to Madagascar unaffected." If any one has actually done it, it is after a long period of hard spiritual life in retirement. If any one of the author's knowledge was unfit to withstand the trials and temptations of the world after solitary retirement, does that mean monasticism is useless? If asceticism makes men fanatical and unbalanced and hypoeritical, are not the chances the more when a man plays the double role of a saintly religious teacher and a hard-headed business man,—say, a trader or a lawyer or a pot-boiler? It is a ridiculously flat criticism to say that donning of the yellow robe of a monk will not free one from evil qualities. By donning a lawyer's gown stolen, will one become a lawyer? Is there any ordinance in the statute book penalising the wearing of a mere yellow robe by a rogue, if there is no chargeable crime?

Indian readers are specially to be warned against these and other simi-

lar statements. On page 153 we read, "Nothing that you do with or by the body is going to affect your spiritual state drastically." It doesn't matter you think of worldly things or spiritual things; you may meditate on a carved image of Jesus or a shining door-handle. (p. 110). The first statement lays the axe at the root of morality and therefore of spirituality too; the second one is just the opposite of *Isvarapranidhana* advocated in Hindu Yoga. According to the method forestalled here, "No church, no temple is necessary." (p. 36). Yet the author whose aim is to put "the mysterious feats and doctrines of the Yogis and Fakirs upon a scientific basis" speaks of planetary Overmind, Sacred, Four, etc. He speaks of reincarnation, grace, Guru and help of other powers as unscientific theology does. Long meditation is harmful; so just in the midst of busy life one may dip into the "pure white radiance of consciousness inside," hanging on a peg outside, like a coat, all worries and desires. Yoga, as it is put down in the book, is certainly not emptying of mind but calming the modifications of the mind. It is the violent attempt to empty the mind that makes meditation irksome. Meditation is not laborious only when the mind is deeply interested in the object on which the mind is fixed. Such interest can be engendered only by cultivating the worshipful attitude taught by religion. "The material world," the author says, "is the great lethal-chamber of the soul." Yet enjoyments need not be forgone. The universe is an illusion; yet financial security is the first thing one should seek. There is no room for a personal God; yet grace and help will come. If you want

to find the Kingdom you must give up your personal ego, and if you give up your personal ego you give up desire for material things (p. 236). One is asked to entrust them to the Father in Heaven; yet renunciation is only an attitude of mind and not the giving up of luxurious possessions one may have. It is hard to circumvent these sharp contradictions.

On page 277 of the book the author rightly says, "a true sage.....does not advertise himself, and he never labels himself as such." Yet this book has an interesting egotistical flavour throughout. We read here the author's autobiographical revelations: "I have unconsciously become more and more a tutor and less and less a seeker" (p. 10). "I have....put on the prophet's mantle...." (p. 12). "I have indeed practised meditation for many years....." (p. 14). "Personally I have slept on the rock floor of Yogi's caves as well as on the regal bed of palaces and felt equally

....." (p. 141). ".....I hold thought at rest in its infinite source; London or New York is as quiet to me as that solitary Indian hill where I found my Master" (p. 147). "Once I stood under the tree where young Jesus had been carried while his mother rested on the flight into Egypt." (p. 273). Good wine needs no bush. Though the book is attractively written in an unconventional style and contains some useful information, there is very little originality except in the manner of writing. To a person well-read in Hindu religion either in its ancient texts or in authentic modern translations and expositions of them, there is nothing new in the book except some strange notions which are likely to mislead the genuine Sadhaka. We do not perceive in this book either scholarly exactitude, or the inspirational quality characteristic of the utterances of a saintly personage.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DISCIPLE

Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life.—The Editors.]

Disciple: Mother, the Master has designated many as his 'own.' What does that mean?

Mother: The Master used to say that some of them came out from his body and some from the pores of his

hair, hands and feet, and that they were his eternal companions. It is like a king taking with him his retinue whenever he visits a place. When I go to Jayaramvati, do not my companions go with me? Likewise, those

who are the Master's 'own' accompany him in different ages when he is born on earth. He used to say, "Those who belong to my 'inner circle' feel pain in my distress." Pointing to his intimate disciples, the Master would say, "They are happy in my happiness, sad in my sadness and distressed in my distress." Whenever he comes to the earth, all are born with him. He brought down Narendra from the plane of the "Seven Sages", though the whole of him did not come down. While meditating in the Kali Temple of Dakshineswar, he saw Sambhu Mullik behind the image of the Divine Mother. He had seen Balaram as he appeared later on. At the first meeting with him, the Master remarked, "I saw him exactly as I perceive him now—fair in complexion and with turban on." Next is Suren Mittra. The Master used to say that these three were the suppliers of his needs. One day the Master asked, "Why have they placed the food-offering before my picture instead of before Mother Kali?" We were frightened thinking that it might harm him. The Master replied, "Don't be worried about it. You will see hereafter that I shall be worshipped in every house...."

Disciple: You once told me at Jayaramvati that the Master would incarnate next time among the "white people." Is that true?

Mother: No. I said that he would have many devotees among the "white people." Don't you see that many Christians devoted to him are coming here nowadays? The Master said that he would be born again. Till then he would dwell in the hearts of his devotees. From the round porch

of his room he said to me, pointing to Bali and Uttarpara, that he would be born again in the north-west. I said to him, "I will not come again." Lakshmi said that she would not come back again to this earth even if she were chopped to shreds like smoking tobacco. The Master said to us with a smile, "Where will you stay? You are all like the ramifications of the *Kalmi* creeper. If one end is pulled, then the whole thing moves in that direction." Well, what is the need of so many words? The Master used to say, "You have come to the orchard to eat mangoes. Satisfy that desire of yours. What will you gain by counting the leaves and branches?"

Disciple: But, Mother, what shall we achieve unless we have direct vision? Once I asked a Mussalman fakir, "One sits with an angling rod on the bank of a lake or a river in the expectation of catching fish. He never does so near a mud-puddle. Have you got a glimpse of that for which you have become a religious mendicant?"

Mother: What did he say?

Disciple: What could he say?

Mother (after a little reflection): You have said the right thing. That is true. What does it avail a man unless he gets some kind of realisation? But one should continue to have faith in things spiritual.

Disciple: The other day Sarat Maharaj said that Swami Vivekananda also had remarked, "Suppose, there is a lump of gold in the adjoining room and a thief sees it from this room. There is an intervening wall which prevents his taking possession of this precious metal. Under such condition can he ever sleep? All the time he thinks how he can get that

lump of gold! In the same way, if a man is firmly convinced that there is such a thing as God, then can he ever indulge in a worldly life?"

Mother: That is true, indeed.

Disciple: Whatever you may say, Mother, renunciation and dispassion are the chief things. Shall we ever acquire them?

Mother: Certainly you will. You will gain everything, if you but take refuge in the Master. Renunciation, alone, was his splendour. We take his name, eat and enjoy things, because he renounced all. People think that his devotees also must be very great as he was a man of such complete renunciation.

"Ah me! One day, he went to my room in the Nahabat. He had no spices in his small bag. He used to chew them now and then. I gave him some to chew there and also put a few in a paper and asked him to take the small packet to his room. He proceeded towards his room; but instead of going there, he went straight to the embankment of the Ganges. He did not see the way, nor was he conscious of it. He was repeating, 'Mother! shall I drown myself?' I became restless with agony. The river was full to the brim. I was a young woman and did not go out of my room. I could not see anyone about. Whom should I send to him! At last I found a Brahmin of the Kali Temple coming in the direction of my room. Through him, I called Hriday, who was taking his meal. He left his plate, ran to the Master, caught hold of him and brought him back to his room. A moment later, he would have dropped into the Ganges."

Disciple: Why did he go south to the river?

Mother: Because I put a few spices in his hand he could not find his way. A holy man must not lay things by. His renunciation was one hundred per cent complete.

Once a Vaishnava Sadhu came to the Panchavati. At first he showed a great deal of renunciation. Alas! Finally like a rat he began to pull and gather various things—pots, cups, jars, grain, rice, *dal* and so forth. The Master noticed it and said one day, "Poor thing! This time he is going to be ruined!" He was about to be entangled in the snare of Maya. The Master advised him strongly about renunciation, and further asked him to leave the place. Then, he went away....

Disciple: The daughter of a devotee has written from her father-in-law's place that she would like to come here to see you. She has sent you her salutations. She has, further, requested you to be careful so that her husband's relatives might not know about her writing to you.

Mother: Then do not write any reply to her. Again she wants me to conceal it from her relatives. I do not know such a game of hide and seek. At Jayarambati, Jogindra (the postman) used to write letters for me. Many complained saying, "Does the postman read our letters?" They did not like my asking a man like him to read their letters. Why? There is no deceit in me. Let anybody who likes see my letters.

Another devotee inquired when the Holy Mother would return to Jayarambati. I said to her, "Let me tell the devotee that you will return

there in the autumn at the time of the Jagaddhatri-puja."

Mother: O no, no! Can one be sure of it? As to where I shall be—that remains entirely in the hand of God. To-day a man is, and to-morrow he is not.

Disciple: O Mother, why should you talk like that? It is because you are alive that so many people are able to see you and get peace of mind.

Mother: Yes, that is true.

Disciple: Please do live for our sake.

In a tender voice, choked with emotion, she said, "Alas! How fond they are of me! I am also very fond of them." Her eyes were moist with tears. The disciple was fanning her. She said to him in the most compassionate voice, "My child! I bless you from my heart that you may live long, attain devotion and enjoy peace. Peace is the principal thing. One needs peace alone."

Disciple: Mother, one idea crops up in my mind constantly: Why do I not get the vision of the Master? As he is our very own, why does he not reveal himself to us, for he can do so by his mere will.

Mother: That is true. Who can say why he does not reveal himself when you suffer from so many miseries and sorrows? Once Balarama's<sup>1</sup> wife was ill. The Master said to me, "Go to Calcutta and visit her." "How shall I go?"—I said, "I don't see any carriage or other vehicle here." The Master replied in an excited voice, "What! Balarama's family is in such trouble and you hesitate to go! You will walk to Calcutta. Go

on foot!" At last a palanquin was brought and I set out from Dakshineswar. Twice I visited her during her illness. On another occasion I went on foot, at night from Shyampukur. Where, indeed, will man be, if God does not protect him in his trouble?

Disciple: I know sorrows and sufferings are inevitable as long as a man lives in the physical body. I do not ask the Master to remove the sufferings. But can't he console us by revealing himself to us in the midst of our troubles and sorrows?

Disciple: A man whose spiritual consciousness has been partially awakened and who wants to realize God, suffers a great deal, if he does not see Him. They alone know how much they suffer!

Mother: Ah! How true it is! Ordinary people are quite happy. They eat, drink and make themselves merry. The devotees alone have no end of suffering.

Disciple: Don't you suffer at the suffering of the devotees?

Mother: Why should I? He who has created the world looks after all.

Disciple: Don't you want to come back to this earth in a human form, for the sake of the devotees?

Mother: Oh! Such suffering in a human body! No more! May I not be born again! At the time of his illness, the Master expressed the desire to eat an Amalaki fruit. Durga Charan procured some after searching for three days without food and sleep. The Master asked him to take his meals and ate some rice in order to turn the food into Prasada. I said to the Master, "You are eating rice quite well. Why then, should you eat farina pudding? You should eat rice

<sup>1</sup>One of the chief householder disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

rather than pudding." "No, no," said he, "I would rather eat farina during these last days of my life." It was such unbearable suffering for him to eat even farina! Every now and then he would throw it out through his nose. I went to the Shiva temple of Tarakeswar for divine intervention. I vowed to get medicine for the Master or end my life there. I lay down in the temple without touching food or drink. One day passed away and another also. My efforts proved futile. During the night I was startled to hear a sound. It was as if someone were breaking a pile of earthen pots with one blow. I woke up from my torpor and the idea flashed in my mind, "Who is a husband and who is a wife? Who is my relative in the world! For whose sake am I about to kill myself in this place?" All my attachment (Maya) for the Master disappeared. My mind was filled with utter re-

nunciation. I groped through darkness and sprinkled my face with holy water from the pit at the back of the temple. I drank also a little water as my throat was parched with thirst. I felt refreshed. The next morning I came to the garden-house at Cossipore where the Master lived at that time. No sooner did he see me than he asked, "Hallo! Did you get anything? Well, everything is unreal." At that time too the Master saw in a dream that an elephant had gone out to bring medicine for him. The animal was digging the earth to procure it when he woke up. The Master asked me if I ever had any dreams. I had seen in a dream that the neck of the image of the Mother Kali was bent to one side. I had asked her, "Mother! Why do you stand like that?" The Mother said, "It is because of this (pointing to the cancer in the throat of the Master). I also have that in my throat."

## THE ADVAITA AND THE MORAL PARADOXES

BY DR. P. T. RAJU, M.A., PH.D., SASTRI.

[Dr. Raju is a philosophical writer of distinction and professor of that subject in the Andhra University. In the following paragraphs he refutes the commonplace criticism that the Advaitin's philosophical belief cannot be consistent with his daily behaviour as his physical and psychical reactions are often not far removed from those of any ordinary man.—The Editors.]

Often it is asked of the Advaitin why, if he regards the world as unreal, he behaves as if it were real. The story is told of Sankara that, while he was going through the streets of Benares, he was attacked by a tusker and began to run for his life; and that some put him the question, why he was afraid of the elephant if it was unreal. It is also said that the

same test was proposed by Ramanuja to decide the issue between his philosophy and the Advaita. The Advaitin, like Sankara before him, is reported to have answered that the elephant and his running for life were both unreal. The same question is put by a large number of the critics of the Advaita, and usually the same answer is given.

The truth of the Advaitin's answer is that so long as the finite individual is regarded as real, the elephant of which he is afraid is also to be treated as real. They say that both belong to the *Vyavaharikasatta* or empirical reality, and not to the *Paramarthikasatta* or absolute reality. And as belonging to the *Vyavaharikasatta* each is as real as the other. But the critic may still ask why, if we know that the elephant belongs to the empirical reality, we should be afraid of the elephant, which cannot harm our true self. The answer seems to lie in the idea of *Abhinivesa* or the sticking to life or finite existence. In spite of the theoretical knowledge one may have of the final untruth of the world, one may still cling to it as if it were the truth. This is the paradox of the Advaita. One may try to defend this attitude in various ways. It may be said that it is our duty not to knowingly allow our body to be destroyed, because that is the instrument with which we have to realise the "Ought" or *Dharma*; and that we have to allow our *Prarabdha-karma* or the action that has begun to fructify to work itself out, and that to destroy the body meanwhile is as good as committing suicide, which amounts to fear of life, which is a *dvandva* to be avoided; for fear, love, hate, etc., are obstacles in the way of liberation. In spite of all these defences, the critic may remain dissatisfied. For if we know that the elephant is unreal, why am I afraid of it? Though the elephant and the finite self belong to the empirical reality, I really know that the "I" in its essence belongs to the absolute reality, and so cannot be destroyed.

The answer to this question is to be sought in human nature itself. There is a split in our conscious life between the actual and the ideal, the theoretical and the practical. Only because of this is there the separation between what is sought after and the seeking after it,—the knowledge and the admiration of an ideal life and the inability to follow it, our knowledge of the good and our attachment to the evil. Our emotional, affective and volitional nature does not change as our knowledge grows; or it may develop without a corresponding development of intellect, as is evidenced by some of the great saints who were not Pandits. Whether Sankara was attacked by an elephant and whether he actually ran for life are disputable questions. On the other hand, there is the story that when Sankara was requested by a Kapalika to be his sacrificial victim, he willingly agreed, saying that none can take his life if he is not destined to die then. The story runs that when the Kapalika raised his sword to chop off Sankara's head, the latter's disciple suddenly appeared on the scene, and, seeing his master in danger, killed the Kapalika. In this story one can see the indifference of Sankara towards empirical existence. Leaving the incident in Sankara's life, we can see that the question can be put to every one who believes in the Advaita. The final answer lies in the nature of our conscious life itself, which is a bundle of divisions and, consequently, of paradoxes. Our theoretical life is separated from the practical and so we know what is good and long for what is bad. The intellectual side is detached from the emotional and the affec-

tive and so our mind may run after the unreal, though we know it to be such.

Further, it would not have been a duty for us to realise the Brahman and emancipate ourselves, if not for our paradoxical life. The fundamental paradox of our life is that we are finite and yet infinite. But we are not always conscious of our infinitude. Hence our duty to realise it. This realisation is not merely a logical understanding of it. It is an Anubhava or experience in which the whole of our conscious life, including the intellectual, emotional, conative and affective, is involved. Hence to know logically that the phenomenal world has no absolute reality is different from the actual experience of it. So in spite of our knowing intellectually that it is unreal, we may treat it as real in our practical life.

Though Moksha or liberation, as it is eternally present, is not something to be produced, it is something to be realised. And it is the duty of every human being to realise it. Sankara in the beginning of his *Aparokshanubhuti* exhorts every man to seek for liberation, saying that it is very difficult for one to be born a man, and that every man therefore should make the best use of his life. It is thus the highest ideal for man to seek after, whether we call it the object of duty or not. But everything that is to be sought after must be known beforehand. Therefore Moksha, the nature of which is the essential identity between Jiva and Brahman, and so is Brahman itself, must be known before it is realised. Hence the peculiar contradiction and scope for the critic to put the question: Why, if you know that you are identical with

Brahman which is the only reality, are you afraid of the elephant?

There is another answer coming from the Advaitin. He distinguishes between what he calls Paroksha- and Aparoksha-Jnana, that is, indirect and direct knowledge. Our knowledge of the ideal, so far as it remains an ideal, is always indirect. Aparoksha-Jnana is direct experience, and it can be had only when the ideal is realised. Hence so far as ordinary people are concerned, their knowledge of Brahman, in spite of the greatest possible intellectual conviction that may accompany it, is always indirect, and so long as our knowledge is indirect, our practical life will be at variance with our theoretical life.

A similar paradox is to be found in our moral life as well. Nothing is morally binding upon man if he does not know that it is morally good. That is, morality appears only when a man knows that something is morally good and yet does the opposite. Children and mad people who do not understand morality are not held morally responsible for what they do. So one essential condition of moral responsibility is that the agent should know what his moral good is. But the wonder is, why, if he knows the good, does he perform evil? On the other hand, it is unreasonable to say that he is immoral if he does things without knowing what is good. This is no less a wonder than the fact that all people know that they are sure to die, but few care to think of it; they go about their work as if they are eternal—a fact pointed out by Yudhishthira as an answer to one of the questions of the Yaksha. Curiously enough Socrates identified morality with knowledge, and said

that to be ignorant of the good is to be immoral. This view of Socrates may be defended by distinguishing between various meanings and implications of his statement. It is true that one cannot be moral if one does not know the good; but it is equally true that simply to know the good is not the same thing as to be moral. But we may go further and add that to be ignorant of the good is neither moral, nor immoral, but amoral. That is, in such cases the question of morality does not arise at all. The prick of conscience is not felt at all after actions done unknowingly. One may blame oneself for not having known, but not for having done it without knowing. So the mistake of Socrates was that he overlooked the divorce between the theoretical and the practical life of the average man. Everybody does not strive after what he knows to be good. In spite of his knowledge, he may hanker after the evil. Only because of this wonderful nature of man does morality appear at all. We may ask, Why is his nature so? But the question can be answered only when we can answer: Why is there this creation at all? Why has God created this universe? Why is man created as he is?

Seeing the similarity between the Advaita and the moral paradoxes, we may ask, Is the Advaitin refuted when questioned why he runs away from a charging elephant, though he knows that it is unreal? The answer can be only in the negative. To refute a philosophical theory by practical devices is unphilosophical. If a scientist tells us that food is nothing but carbon, oxygen, etc., and we ask him why he does not eat charcoal, we do not refute his theory. Johnson

kicked at a stone, and asked, in order to refute Berkeley's idealism, how that can be an idea. But we all feel that Johnson's refutation is unphilosophical. Similarly, when the Advaitin, who is living his mundane life, is asked why he treats this world as real, why he cares for his body, his food and so forth, it is really no refutation. A philosophical theory, because it is a theory, can be refuted only philosophically.

But it may be asked, Is not the Advaita philosophy a philosophy of life also? If so, are not its preachings to be put into practice? But there are ways and ways of putting theory into practice. When the scientist tells that food is a compound of so many elements, his theory is not put into practice by eating those elements pure and simple. We try to understand what food is suitable for human beings, and then ascertain whether the food we are taking contains all the necessary ingredients. And if any is found wanting we try to introduce it in an edible form. But we never say that the scientist is a liar, because he does not eat the elements as they are. But when a man tells us that lying is immoral and drinking an evil habit, we are justified in finding out whether he himself is a truth-speaker and does not drink. Here the test as well as the application of the teaching is direct. But the application of a philosophical theory which determines the highest end of man and speaks of things beyond the world, can never be so direct. If we do not bear this in mind, we shall be very unfair to the philosopher and his theory, and shall miss the truth by caricaturing it.

The application of the Advaita to life is to be done only by stages, and

generally by the four Asramas. It is only in the last Asrama, that is of the Sannyasa, that one is asked to treat the world as unreal. The previous stages are stepping-stones to it. By the time one reaches the fourth stage, the gulf between the theoretical and the practical life must have been bridged, and emotions and affections must have been following the lead of the intellect. Even in Sannyasa there are various stages which are preparatory to final emancipation. In the final stage, *i.e.*, when one feels his absolute identity with the Brahman, one does not perceive the phenomenal world at all. An elephant may attack him, a tiger may devour him; he remains indifferent. It is so not only with the Advaitin, but also with the Dvaitin or Visishtadvaitin; for even the latter in deep devotion to the Lord forgets himself so completely that he cannot perceive what happens to his body. But in the ordinary state everyone feels his identity with the body and tries to protect it when he finds himself in danger.

The unreality with which the phenomenal world is credited is not ab-

solute unreality like that of the horns of a hare. It is only relative. That is, when the phenomenal world is compared with the Absolute, it has to be declared unreal. And when not so compared, it is real. Further, we should not forget that the Advaitin calls this world neither real nor unreal. So the Advaitin can reply that he saves himself from the elephant because it is not unreal.

Of all the answers that can be given to the critic's question, the one that goes to the root of the matter lies in the dual or paradoxical nature of man. We have eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We know the good and yet do the evil. Otherwise, we could not have been moral beings. Similarly, we know that we are infinite, and yet act as finite. Why is this so? Because we are what we are. We have been created thus. We are all houses divided against themselves. Our intellect leads us one way, our passions another, and emotions a third. Hence the conflict within us, and hence the appearance of morality, and hence also the exhortation to realise our true self, which is identical with Brahman.

## PREPARATION FOR SPIRITUAL REALISATION

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants at Wiesbaden, Germany, in January 1934.—The Editors.]

### I

IN the beginning of our Sadhana we do not get any spiritual experience, because that is only the scavenging period when loads and loads of dirt and impurities have to be removed. Only when the mirror is clean does

it begin to reflect. Evil thoughts arise even if the mind has already been made strong to a certain extent, but then they no longer harm it and can easily be conquered. If a boat has a good and experienced helmsman, it can face the storm without fear of

perishing. Unless this phenomenal world has been effaced completely, desires and passions, attraction and aversion, can never be annihilated in their subtlest form. "When he realizes the Atman as dwelling in all things and finds all things dwelling in his own Self, the sage ceases to hate." Until then the passions rise in the mind, but if we have strengthened our moral fibre through our Sadhana, we are able to withstand them and drive them away.

Love need not take always the calm, peaceful method. True love can often be as hard as steel, can use harsh words. The knife of the surgeon cuts, but then it cuts in order to heal. These Great Ones may appear cruel and heartless in some of their advices, but through the kindness of their 'cruelty' they heal and bring life.

Until we feel the coming of grace, we must strive. Self-effort has its place in spiritual life, and never can real self-surrender come unless we have really striven our utmost.

When the devotee has caught a glimpse of the Transcendental, he no longer troubles and bothers about the right breeze, whether it is a hot breeze or a cold breeze or no breeze at all. He need not unfurl his sails any longer.

The two tests of vision are: Bliss, certitude. Then the mind knows Truth is real. Then something in us knows it is true and it carries with it its own unmistakable light and conviction.

Let the teacher be merged into your own Ishtam, let the form-aspect get merged into the formless. By so doing, you will avoid all fanaticism and bigotry and always remain conscious of the One Principle standing at the

back of all teachers and all teachings.

Once Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great dramatist of Bengal, said to Sri Ramakrishna, "The Lord has created you with His own hands. Us He has created with His machine."

Brahmacharya alone is real Tapasya, and there can be no Tapasya whatever without perfect Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed. This has to be stressed again and again.

## II

Let us try to be as hard as possible against ourselves without any unnecessary or destructive self-condemnation.

I should always use my discrimination even with regard to non-violence. The scorpion, no doubt, follows its own law of being when it stings, but I, too, should follow my own law and protect others from its sting if I can do so.

Buddha taught, "Hatred cannot be conquered by hatred. It is by love that hatred can be conquered." Christ taught, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Evil can never be conquered by evil. Violence can never be conquered by violence. The only weapon that conquers all is love and loving kindness to all creatures.

And what an amount of strength and undauntedness true non-violence requires! We should not be weak, we should not be cowards, but we should at the same time be kind. The person who does not retaliate, however he is hurt, however he is offended by others, is a person of terrible strength, and he alone is a man. All others are miserable cowards hiding their fear and abject cowardice under a cloak of braggadism, physical and

mental, and never rising to the stature of a man.

### III

Struggle, struggle, struggle. There is no other way. Let us not be afraid of struggles.

Success largely depends on the regularity and intensity of our daily practices. Very often we are so careless in this. Without steady practice nothing can be attained in spiritual life. Spiritual life must be a life of dedication to the highest, a life of consecration and sacrifice and one-pointedness. So we should be more wide-awake and more careful about our own thoughts for our own benefit and for the benefit of others to whom our thoughts may become a danger. Our thoughts, if they be thoughts of lust or greed or violence, are worse than poison gas, and the havoc created by them is far worse than the havoc created by poison gas. By our impure thoughts we affect people who do not even know impurity. By our pure thoughts we help others in their struggle after purity.

It is essential for us to create the right mood before sitting for meditation. There must be steady, regular practice. Let us rather die in the struggle with our body and our impure mind than give it up. What does it matter if I die or not? What matters is that I realise the Truth, that I attain my full stature, my true being. If we struggle our utmost, if we do our utmost, we have fulfilled our duty. Then the rest must be left to the Divine. Here true self-surrender and resignation to the Lord have their place.

### IV

Turning the mind constantly and without any break to God, whatever

you may be busy with, is the most efficient of all forms of spiritual practice. But you must be able to raise the plane of thought. See that you do not tie your boat to the bank by not fulfilling the preliminary conditions of Yama and Niyama. If you allow your boat to remain tied to the bank, no amount of rowing and exertion on your part will move it even an inch onward.

Try to make the individual ego subservient to the Cosmic Ego. The ego is very difficult to subdue. It is like a monster with hundreds and hundreds of heads.

Never try to face the enemy in the open at the beginning. Never give him a frontal attack. The enemy is still too strong for you. Let us first save ourselves even by flight. Later, we come back with greater strength, with the strength of the Lord, because some day the enemy has to be openly faced and vanquished. Eternal flight won't do.

Once Ganesa was sitting on the lap of his mother Durga, when he happened to touch Her back and found there to his great astonishment a deep scar. "Mother," said he, "who did that?" "My boy," the Goddess replied, "you ill-treated a little cat, and so I got this mark, everything being My own body." When the question of Ganesa's marriage arose, he refused to be married, because the experience of the little cat he ill-treated and the scar of his Mother's back had taught him a great lesson and had made him realise that all women were but his own mother.

There is another story about Ganesa which is illustrative of a high lesson. Once Mother promised a

beautiful necklace to that one of Her boys who would be able to go round the universe and be back first. Kartikeya departed at once with all possible speed, but Ganesa just remained sitting on the lap of his Mother, and after some time quietly got down, went round Her once, and got on to Her lap again. So when Kartikeya came back he found to his great astonishment that Ganesa was already sitting on Durga's lap and had received the necklace. Ganesa had realised that, his Mother being all-pervading and omnipresent, it was sufficient to go round Her once without going round the whole universe as his brother had done.

All these symbolical stories and representations of truths are highly instructive if we but know how to read them aright. See Mother in every woman, then you, too, will say like Ganesa, "How is it possible for me to marry?" Through the infinite grace of Mother our whole attitude towards men and women can change, just as it had changed in the case of Ganesa.

The more we progress, the more we cease to love ourselves and to identify ourselves with our physical form. In the same way we cease loving others as bodies or feeling any sex-attraction for them. In India, Ganesa is one of the greatest symbols for perfect purity.

## VI

Self-realisation is a very difficult process, and it takes a long time to attain it. But as soon as you come to feel the tide, you know that you are approaching the ocean. And then you should be glad that there is any tide at all. The ocean may still be distant, but if the tide makes itself

felt, you know you have travelled a good way down the river. The old impressions must be attenuated, erased through rubbing and rubbing and rubbing, till they have completely disappeared.

Just as the thickness of a cloud in the sky differs, just as this cloud may be only a very thin veil or a dark black cloud which does not allow the sun's rays to penetrate, similarly in this world of Maya there is a thin coat or a thick coat covering Truth.

Some manifestations of Mother are to be saluted at a very safe distance so long as we ourselves are not yet fully immune from their influence. The Mother's play has two aspects, one which binds, and one which frees; but both are within Maya, not beyond Maya. Never think that the freeing aspect is beyond Maya. It, too, is within the ambit of Maya.

## VII

"Whenever you come across a person who is of a different ideal of life, do not speak out your thoughts." (Sri Chaitanya).

First there must be physical control, then mental control, and once mental control is attained, thought can never again come down or be dragged down to the sensual plane. This only happens if we have led a controlled life, physically and mentally, for many, many years without any break. Then impure thoughts may now and then arise, but they are no longer able to stain us.

There must be a completely new attitude towards ourselves, towards the world, towards all mental pictures and memories in our mind.

We should feel sorry when an unclean thought wells up in our mind,

but this should spur us on all the more and make us more dogged than ever. We should be thankful that we have come to know that such unclean things exist in our mind. If we did not know this, we could never fight them successfully. The greater the trouble, the more manly the fight; the greater our determination to remove them, the greater our relentless tenacity!

If really there is dirt and filth in our mind, let us know this fact, and know how bad it is. To know an evil as it is, is half the battle won. It

is always good for us to know the possibilities of our mind to do us great mischief, so that we may be on our guard and become fully aware of its wily attempts at deception. What a terrible amount of misery man creates for himself and others by giving in to the impulses of lust, anger, greed, violence, etc. And all these impulses lie deeply hidden in our mind too, if we do not come to know them and annihilate them. Unless we turn our mind consciously to the higher life, it will always remain full of these.

## MODERN CIVILIZATION NEEDS CORRECTION

BY G. A. CHANDAVARKAR, M.A., M.R.A.S.

[The title of this short writing explains its contents. Mr. Chandavarkar pleads for a revival of the study of the humane and the spiritual in Sanskritic culture so as to amend the wrongs of modern society.—The Editors.]

IN this age of science and democracy man's eyes are dazzled by his glorious achievements such as the steam-engine, the telegraph, the telephone, the motor car, the aeroplane, the radio, the Parliaments and the League of Nations. All this means to him progress in civilization and the consequent increase of human happiness. How far such a civilization has advanced the cause of soul culture is still a moot question. A school of thought whose origin can be traced in the history of English literature even back to Cowper, Pope, Carlyle and Emerson has now arisen which presents a diametrically opposite view. Thinkers like Bertrand Russell and Dean Inge argue with considerable force that a civilization based on materialism is doomed. What did the ancient Hindu thinkers believe?

What was their criterion of progress and happiness?

They firmly believed that human life can be full only when there is harmony between the internal and the external life. For such a purpose they argued that Dharmic life was essential. The modern civilization emphasises the external, while they laid great force upon the control of the external by the internal. If the external life is dominated by notions of increase of wealth, power and aggression, they argued that all the beneficent activities of the human heart would be atrophied. Soul would be crushed by the weight of matter. The rule of the Dollar, almighty as it is supposed to be, has enriched man externally perhaps but it has made him poorer in matters of the mind and the soul. The doctrine of utilitarianism

has again dried up the eternal founts of fellow-feeling and harmony. If the modern civilization prides itself on the doctrine of "the survival of the fittest," the ancient Hindu thinkers stood up for the amelioration of the weak and the fallen. The "Tat Twam Asi" ideal preached that even the humblest had the divine spark within him and had all the elements of divine glory within him. He was a microcosm of the macrocosm. Such an ideal meant that the civilisation had the Dharmic ideal or basis for its progress. Else they held under the cloak of material prosperity the seeds of ruin.

Even in the material West a reaction has set in. The preachings of Vedanta have ushered in a new era of thought. It proclaims from the housetops that unless a civilisation is based on the progress of soul culture, there is no hope for it. Vedanta never stood for inaction. The institutions of Varnas and Ashramas clearly indicate that a life of beneficent activities only was meant to be lived. The first three Ashramas were only the preparations for the last, Sannyasa. Even the much-maligned caste system had Guna and Karma for its basis. Such a rational system meant communal harmony and social welfare. But now in the West where the caste system is thrown to the winds the caste of wealth has taken its place. The Ashramas of old, four as they were before, are now reduced only to one of incessant money-making and money-spending. Naturally there is no peace. Dictators stand for power and the State for God. Democracies degenerate into mobocracy. The whole society seems to stand on the brink of a precipice.

Individualism means self-aggrandisement. Struggle for power means the destruction of the weaker nations. Even such a good institution like the League of Nations with all its noble ideals has lost its ground. A war of nerves has heralded a huge war of wholesale destruction of humanity. The armed camps of the western countries should cry halt. Else the whole edifice of culture and civilisation will topple down like a house of cards. The message of Vedanta which includes the truth of "Love thy neighbour as thyself" preaches, "Love thy neighbour because he and you are all one." Unless such notions guide the thinkers and the moulders of the destinies of the nations and the civilisation is based on the ideals of Dharma, there seems to be no hope for mankind. The day when it is realised that the soul of culture is the culture of soul, will be the brightest day in the history of man. The Hindu philosophy says in quite unequivocal terms that by Dharma alone the universe will stand and without it everything will go to rack and ruin. The dawn of that bright day may come with the radical changes introduced in all our systems of thought including the educational and social systems. The changes should be radical and the reforms root and branch. The task is no doubt Herculean but one need not despair of the future. A new type of civilisation may grow on the ruins of a tottering system of present-day feverish activities of worshiping Mammon and Power in all its crudities. Perhaps a sympathetic study of the eastern systems of thought and rational philosophy may set the erring humanity on the right path. To start with, an earnest revival of them in the

land of their birth may facilitate matters. Vigorous attempts should be made in India itself to popularise Sanskrit Literature. In these days of

vernacularisation the claims of Sanskrit ought not to be sacrificed at the altar of narrow nationalism or provincialism.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYACISANANDA

[The name of sage Narada is very familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a *Jnani* and *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.—The Editors.]

### SUTRA 67 TO 68

We have seen how according to Bhakti Sastra all effort is for the purification of the emotions through developing a kind of undiluted, one-pointed, incessant stream of love to the blessed feet of the Lord similar to the love of a devoted wife or servant, and how all spiritual practices should ultimately lead to this love. This is the highest stage in Sadhana; and it is this Bhakti that ripens into Para Bhakti or the manifestation of the natural glory and perception of the Lord. A description of this stage of devotion is given in the next 12 Sutras.

भक्ता एकान्तिनो मुख्याः ॥ ६७ ॥

एकान्तिनः: Who have one-pointed love of Lord for His own sake  
भक्ताः: devotees मुख्याः: are primary.

67. Those are primary<sup>1</sup> devotees who have one-pointed<sup>2</sup> love of God for His own sake.

*Note.—1. Primary.* As distinguished from the Guna or Secondary Bhaktas referred to in Sutra 56.

2. *One-pointed love of Lord.* The devotion of these Bhaktas has transcended the three Gunas as pointed out in the last Sutra, and is therefore not mixed with the least tinge of worldliness or selfishness. They do not yearn even for Mukti. God is not loved by them as a means for something else.

कण्ठवोधरोमाचाश्रुभिः परस्परं लपमानाः  
पावयन्ति कुलानि पृथिवीं च ॥ ६८ ॥

कण्ठवोध-रोमाचाश्रुभिः: With choking voice, tearful eyes and thrilled bodies परस्पर् with one another लपमानाः: conversing कुलानि families पृथिवीम् च the land which gave them birth. पावयन्ति purify.

68. Conversing<sup>1</sup> with one another<sup>2</sup> with choking voice, tearful eyes and thrilled bodies, they purify<sup>3</sup> not only their families<sup>4</sup> but the land which gave birth<sup>5</sup> to them.

*Note.—1. Conversing.* Refers not merely to verbal talk, but to every one of their activities. The least of their movements, conscious or unconscious, their whole life itself, are eloquent of

the love surging within them and proclaim to the world their love of the Lord.

2. *With one another.* Devotees always like to talk of their Beloved to other devotees like themselves. But it does not mean that they will spend all their time in mere talk with their equals. Their interest will lie more in redeeming the sinners and evil-doers, and for this purpose they will all be eager to teach and preach, so that all may become sharers in the bliss of devotion and love which they themselves enjoy. But they are not like ordinary teachers and preachers, who are conscious of their superiority, but when they teach or preach they consider themselves only as servants. They see only God even in their disciples and serve Him. They deem themselves blessed because they have thus got an opportunity to serve Him. This is the eternal *dasya* referred to in the previous Sutra.

3. *Purify.* Their very presence is sufficient to purify everybody that comes into contact with them. They do not think others as impure and do not presume to purify them; but others get purified still as a result of their contact with them.

4. *Families.* An echo of the famous Verse which says, "His family is purified, his mother is satisfied and the whole earth becomes full of virtue." One devotee in a family unconsciously affects all others in the family. Even the parents or wife and children who may at first oppose him in the initial stages of his devotion come round in the long run and all their opposition vanishes completely. It is easy for the members

of a family who love one another to catch the contagion of devotion. Thus in the Brahma Sutra, IV: 1.7 also it is stated that all Punya (or religious merit) of a devotee is said to go to his relatives. The power of the devotee to purify others is referred to by Bhagavan HImself in Bhagavata, XI: 14.16, where He goes to the extent of saying that He himself takes care to follow His devotees where they go so that He may purify Himself with the dust of their feet.

5. *The land which gave him birth.* The devotee's spiritual influence gradually spreads from family to village, from village to province, from province to country, and from country to the whole world. Even if he had run away from home and concealed himself in a solitary cave in a forest, his spirituality will break through the walls of the cave, and the spiritual waves set up by his devotion will inundate the whole world until it finds an echo in all pure hearts ready to receive it. Cf. Bhagavata IX: 9.6; XI: 14.24, etc.

तीर्थकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि सुकर्माकुर्वन्ति कर्माणि  
सच्चास्ती कुर्वन्ति शास्त्राणि ॥ ६२ ॥

ते They तीर्थानि places of pilgrimage तीर्थकुर्वन्ति make holy कर्माणि actions सुकर्माकुर्वन्ति make good or virtuous शास्त्राणि scriptures सच्चास्तीकुर्वन्ति make good scriptures.

69. They give sacredness or holiness to places of pilgrimage<sup>1</sup>, impart righteousness or goodness to actions<sup>2</sup> and give spiritual authority to scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

*Note.—1. Places of pilgrimage.* The word Tirtha comes from the root

tri and means something which enables man to cross over an obstacle, like the ford in a river. All holy persons, or things, or places, or qualities, which enable a man to cross over Samsara are therefore called Tirthas. Cf. the famous verse which says, "Truth is Tirtha, compassion is Tirtha, self-control is Tirtha, kindness is Tirtha." Also, "charity is Tirtha, self-control is Tirtha, contentment is Tirtha, continence is Tirtha," etc. But ordinarily the word is used either to denote places of pilgrimage or the holy water (*padodaka*) left after ritualistic worship. These are really called Tirtha only because by resorting to them one becomes purified and free from sins, and is thus enabled to cross over Samsara. Now, what is it that gives this efficacy to these holy places or holy water? The Sutra says that there is nothing special in the place or in the water from the physical or chemical standpoint. It is different from ordinary places or water only because of their association with saints and devotees. Those who know that these things are associated with saints, are reminded by the psychological law of association of ideas, of the pure lives of these saints and through them of God himself; and so the thought of purity, engendered by these, makes them pure for the time being at least. If a man resorts to it without any previous knowledge of its sacredness, it has no spiritual effect at all. That Christians or Mohammedans do not derive any benefit by the performance of a pilgrimage to Brindavan or Kasi or Puri, and that they reap the same result by going to Jerusalem or Mecca, shows that these places do not have anything inherent in them which makes them holy. This shows

the reason why many people are not benefited even by pilgrimages, because they are not reminded of any holy person's life thereby. Bhagavata goes to the extent of saying that it is not water or the images of these places that really form the real Tirtha, but the saints who purify by mere sight, by virtue of God residing in their heart. Holy places are therefore holy because holy persons resort to it and may be met with in large numbers there. Persons who do not associate with such places and living saints may at least be reminded of some holy persons with whom the place was associated in the past. Thus it is the saint that imparts sanctity to Tirthas, *vide* Bhagavata, IV: 30.37.

2. *Righteousness to actions.* As in the case of Tirthas such actions as are characteristic of saints are considered righteous by others and fit to be followed by them. It is the saints that are looked up to for guidance in spiritual practices. It is these saints that set the standard of Dharma through example and precept; and the authority of a rule of conduct depends upon the efficacy of that as experienced by some saint or other.

3. *Spiritual authority to scriptures.* The works known as scriptures get their authority from the fact of their being a record of the experiences of saints and sages. It is this fact that distinguishes a scripture from an ordinary book. *Vide* also notes under Sutra 12 as to how scriptures depend upon the saints for their continued life and authority.

तन्मयः ॥ ७० ॥

70. Every one of those mentioned in the last Sutra is filled

with the spirit of the saints and through that with the spirit of God Himself.

*Note*.—This Sutra explains why and how places, actions, and writings become holy through their association with saints.

मोदन्ते पितरो गृह्यन्ति देवताः सनाता चेष्ट  
भूर्भवति ॥ ७१ ॥

पितरः The fathers मोदन्ते rejoice देवताः the Gods गृह्यन्ति dance इयम् this भूः earth सनाता भवति gets a saviour, च and

71. The fathers rejoice<sup>1</sup>, the Gods dance<sup>2</sup>, and this earth gets a saviour<sup>3</sup>.

*Note*.—1. *The fathers rejoice*. The living parents rejoice in the end, because their son is honoured by the whole world as veritable divinity on earth. The departed ancestors who are in a special heaven of their own also rejoice on seeing such worthy son being born in the family. The word Pitri is used in our Sastras to denote not only living parents or the departed ancestors but also the permanent demi-gods known by that name, such as the Agnishvatta and others. Every man who is born is considered by the scriptures as owing a debt to the gods and departed ancestors, and if he fails to discharge these debts all his spiritual practices will be in vain. But if a son becomes a devotee of God there is no more debt for him to anybody. Not only the Pitrис and demi-gods are not angry with him but they rejoice, for all rituals are meant primarily to lead to this stage: When they find a descendant of theirs as having attained the goal, they naturally rejoice. *Vide*

Bhagavata, "He who has given up all his ordinary duties and surrendered himself, body and soul, to the one refuge of all, that is God, the giver of Mukti, is not a debtor to Devas, Rishis, Pitrīs, etc." Also, "As by watering the roots of a tree the whole tree is satisfied, as by satisfying Prana all Indriyas are satisfied, so worship of God is enough worship for all." *Vide* also Padmapurana which says, "The parents are elated, the grandfathers dance, because within their family is born a saint who will save them also."

2. *The Gods dance*. The various minor deities being all included in the one supreme God, they also derive satisfaction when the devotee loves and worships the one and only God. In fact the various Gods are all only symbols of the one God and are not different from them. So there is no harm in giving up the worship of these minor deities, and giving one's whole heart and soul to the one God. *Vide* Gita, XVIII: 65; IX: 22, 25; VII: 21 to 23; IV: 11, etc. The demi-gods are often only souls who have come to the celestial regions to enjoy the result of their Punya (spiritual merit) and have to come down again when their term is over. So when they see a real devotee in this world and see how he has saved himself by his devotion and renunciation, they also are glad at finding out a method of winning everlasting bliss through devotion to God. Naturally then, they must dance when they find a possibility of a higher enjoyment. The demigods are often troubled by the Asuras, and when they find a real devotee being born on earth, they are quite sure that their salvation is near because wherever the devotees are, there God

must also be. There is a common understanding that these demigods get jealous when they find any man becoming spiritual and put obstacles in their way of realisation. Stories relating to such obstruction from these demigods like Indra which we find in the Puranas must not be taken as referring to a sincere devotee's spiritual struggles. The stories relate only to those who are doing sacrifices and other ritualistic practices in expectation of heaven. They do not and cannot even touch a sincere devotee, for God is always at hand to help his devotee. No doubt some obstacles are found even by sincere spiritual aspirants, but they are provided by God himself so that the devotee may grow stronger by such opposition.

3. *This earth gets a saviour.* Only a real saint can save the world. All others are interested only in seeing that the world caters to their own self-aggrandisement and enjoyment. They never have the welfare of the world at heart. Their interest in the world is only like the interest of the butcher in his kid or the agriculturist in his cattle. It is only the loving services of the selfless saints that really lead human beings to their destination, viz., the footstool of God, far away from the troubles and tribulations of this worldly life and death. From the poetic and mythological standpoint of the Puranas, the earth or Bhudevi is one of the wives of Vishnu or God. When virtue subsides and vice prevails, she is said to be feeling as if she is deserted by her Lord and protector. When some saint takes his birth in this world, he must necessarily be followed by God himself and so Bhudevi may be poetically de-

scribed as regaining her Lord and protector whenever devotees appear on earth. Thus according to this Sutra, the devotee satisfies the denizens of all the three worlds.

नास्ति तेषु जाति-विद्या-रूप-कुल-धन-  
क्रियादि-भेदः ॥ ७२ ॥

तेषु in them जाति-विद्या-रूप-कुल-धन-  
क्रियादि-भेदः distinction based on  
caste or culture, beauty or birth,  
wealth or profession, and the  
like. न अस्ति there is not.

72. In them there is no distinction based on caste or culture, beauty or birth, wealth or profession and the like.

*Note.*—In spite of the reproach of exclusiveness based upon caste and other factors that is generally levelled against the Hindus, it ever remained the glory of Hinduism that all privileges and distinctions remained only in social matters and never transgressed its bounds into the field of religion and spirituality. Even caste-ridden orthodox people have not been slow in recognising the spiritual greatness of a low-born Nanda or Kannappar, a Nammalvar or Tiruppanalvar, a Chokanela or Ravidas, a Mirabai or an Avvayar, a Dharmavyadha or a Sabari. Even Parasara, Vyasa, Kavasha, Satyakama Jabala and Mahidasa Aitareya were all born of insignificant non-Brahmin parentage. The Upanishads record that the Brahmins were eager to sit at the feet of Kshatriyas like Ajatasatru, Pravahana Jaivali, Chitra Gargyayani, Asvapati, etc. (Brihadaranyaka, II: 1.15 and VI: 2.7, Cchandogya V: 3.1 and V: 11.4, etc. record some of these facts). Manu says in II: 238, "that one may learn Vidya sit-

ting at the feet of one lower in caste or status than himself and that Dharma may be learnt even from a man of low caste." Thus it does not behove us to make a distinction between one devotee and another, they also do not feel any distinction between man and man. Cf. Gita V: 18 and Bhagavata IX: 29.14. They see the same God in everybody.

यतस्तदीयाः ॥ ७३ ॥

यतः because तदीयाः they are His own.

73. Because they are IIis own.

*Note.*—This gives the reason why there is no distinction. All the Bhaktas are one in God, and to every Bhakta every one in this world belongs to God and as such should be looked upon with the eye of equality.

वादो नावलम्भ्यः ॥ ७४ ॥

वादः controversy न अवलम्भ्यः must not be had recourse to.

74. It is not proper for one to enter into a controversy about God, or other spiritual truths, or about the comparative merits of different devotees.

*Note.*—One who has reached this stage of devotion never cares to enter into a controversy about God or his devotees. They have seen God face to face, and there is no necessity for them to think of name or fame gained by a victory over other opponents in a religious controversy. They do not stand in need of any support from reason either, because their faith is based upon spiritual perception itself. Vain disputations do not therefore find a place in their

lives. If any controversialist challenges them for a discussion, they would refuse to take up the gauntlet.

बाहुन्यावकाशात् । दनियतत्वात् च ॥ ७५ ॥

बाहुन्यावकाशात् as there is plenty of room for diversity in views अनियतत्वात् as no view based upon mere reason is conclusive in itself च and.

75. As there is plenty of room<sup>1</sup> for diversity in views and as no view<sup>2</sup> based upon mere reason is conclusive in itself.

*Note.*—1. *Plenty of room etc.* It is quite possible for one and the same truth to be looked upon from different standpoints; and views may change with differences in the angle of vision, capacities, tendencies, etc. of the observer. Two apparently contradictory views may not be really contradictory at all. Hence there is no sense in one's trying to controvert another's views honestly and sincerely believed in. As Bhagavan says in the Gita, it behoves a real saint, therefore, not to unsettle the honest and sincere views of others but to allow them opportunity to honestly follow what they considered right. *Vide* III: 26 and 29.

2. *No one view etc.* Mere reason may be made to support two entirely opposite views. Therefore it does not follow that a view is true merely because it has got support from reason. What one man considers well-established by reason, can easily be shaken by a more intelligent man. As we often see in law courts, lawyers taking opposite sides try to prove their contention based on the same evidence; reason may thus be used

even in proving a false thing to be true. Therefore it is quite unreliable as a guide. Again what appears as reasonable at one time may appear quite unreasonable when we gather more experience. Thus no one view based upon mere reason can be considered true once for all, for there is always a possibility of its again being proved, by sufficient reason itself, or by further observation, to be untrue. Moreover, when the intention is to secure victory over an opponent and not to establish truth, the chances are that one may be carried far away from truth and truth may thus be thrown overboard for the sake of a victory.

भक्तिशास्त्राणि गननीयानि तदुद्घोषककर्मणि  
करणीयानि ॥ ७६ ॥

भक्तिशास्त्राणि teachings of scriptures dealing with Bhakti गननीयानि may be discussed and meditated upon तदुद्घोषककर्मणि spiritual practices prescribed by them करणीयानि may be undertaken.

76. The teachings of scriptures dealing with love and devotion to God may be discussed<sup>1</sup> and meditated upon, and spiritual practices prescribed by them may be undertaken.<sup>2</sup>

*Note.—1. Discussed.* Although vain controversies may not be entered into, there is nothing to prevent a devotee from discussing the teachings of scriptures dealing with love and devotion for the benefit of others, so that their disciples may be convinced of the truths of the scriptures. Manana or the use of reason to establish faith in the teachings of the scriptures for the benefit of others is not only not prohibited but should be undertaken. Reason thus has its place in spiritual practices. As Manu says, "Only he who understands the teachings of Rishis with the help of reason, not opposed to scriptures, knows what is Dharma and not others (XII: 106)." Thus the prohibition contained in Sutra 74 is not directed against the use of reason in spiritual matters, but against its misuse.

*2. Spiritual practices may be undertaken.*—The spiritual practices are all based on love and devotion; therefore they will only be favourable to a life of devotion. There is therefore no need to give them up. Not only that; one should not give them up. For there are so many people who look up to a devotee for guidance and imitate whatever he does. He should therefore practise them to set an example to others as mentioned in Gita, III: 25, 26.

## GREAT THOUGHTS

The throne of God is in the mind of man.—*Macarius*.

Reputation for Holiness is one of the worst weapons of Satan.

None so empty as those who are full of themselves.

Self-abasement is a subtle form of arrogance.

From true humility comes godliness which makes a man gentle, docile and patient.

Lack of fervour, love of comfort and intellectual pride choke growing spirituality.

Contemplation is not an orgy of spiritual emotions; it involves the serious activity of the whole man—reason, feeling and will; it involves the stilling of the vehement passions and restless imaginations—a sober concentration of the faculties.

In a narrow heart God cannot bide;

Where the love is great, the heart is wide;

Poverty, great-hearted, dignified,

Entertains and welcomes Deity.

Aims of a higher order, even though they be not fulfilled, are in themselves more valuable than lower ones entirely fulfilled.—*Goethe*.

An honourable death is better than an inglorious life.—*Socrates*.

If you pursue good with labour, the labour passes away, but the good remains; if you pursue evil with pleasure, the pleasure passes away but the evil remains.—*Cicero*.

Men would live exceedingly quiet if those two words, mine and thine, were taken away.—*Anaxagoras*.

It is better to be unborn than untaught; for ignorance is the root of all misfortune.—*Plato*.

He who fears death has already lost the life he covets.—*Cato*.

The best keeps from anger, who remembers that God is always looking upon him.—*Plato*.

He is truly rich who desires nothing; and he is truly poor who covets all.—*Solon*.

He is sufficiently learned, that knows how to do well and has power enough to refrain from evil.—*Cicero*.

Bear and blame not what you cannot change.—*Publius*.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Sayings of Muhammad:** *Translated and edited by Allam Sir Abdullah Al-mamun Al-suhrawardy and published by Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, 3 Suhrawardy Avenue, Calcutta. Price Rs. 2. Pocket size.*

Along with the *Imitations of Christ*, *Gospel of Buddha*, *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* and *Analects of Confucius* this *Sayings* deserves to be on the table of all who believe in moral and spiritual values. Besides the Koran, Islam has an enormous collection of Ahadith or traditions of the sayings of the Prophet, genuine or apocryphal. They prescribe how a good Moslem should discharge his duty in different situations in which he finds himself. They are the source of the present beautiful compilation. This work is the result of the burning zeal for pan-Islamism which its compiler, a well-known Bengal Muslim leader and legislator in the Central Assembly, had in his younger days, when he was a student in London, many years ago. The form of the book is quite suitable for the educated men of the present day.

The Muslim's unwavering faith in the unscriptable and final authority of the words of Mohammed makes all his sayings and acts, without any question of importance, equally binding on a faithful Muslim, so much so that it is stated of Iban Hanbal that he 'would not even eat water-melons because, although he knew that the Prophet ate them, he could not learn whether he ate them with or without the rind, or whether he broke, bit or cut them.' This passion to imitate the Prophet is similar or more than what is found in the imitation of Christ among Christian saints. Mohammed was not only a teacher by words but a great moral exemplar. His internal and external personality supplied the driving power to his message. He had a commanding presence, piercing eyes and a gracious smile; he was 'of medium height, broad-shouldered, and strongly built, with fine features, coal-black hair and eyes, and a long beard.' Of manners he was reserved, affable and courteous. 'His countenance painted every sensation of the soul and his gestures en-

forced each expression of his tongue.' He was more modest than a virgin behind the curtain, while being supremely brave and liberal. He did not consider it a condescension to serve his family by milking goats or mending shoes or stitching. He used to wait upon himself. He never struck anyone or anything with his own hands; and on his own account never felt revenge. The rule of life laid down by him for his followers is simple and grand.

Mohammed was not an obscurantist as his adversaries suppose. He exhorted his followers to go for knowledge even to the edge of the earth. 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.' Knowledge illuminates the way to Heaven, affords society in solitude, escorts one to happiness, sustains one in misery, adorns one in the company of friends, serves as a companion in a friendless condition, guards one against the enemies and enables one to distinguish wrong and right. The Prophet therefore declared that the ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr. But knowledge without conduct is to be deplored, if not despised. The worst of men in the eyes of him was a learned bad man. Strive always to excel in virtue and truth--this is the instruction inculcated into the minds of Muslims. Religion, he said, is admonition, and it means being pure. 'God is pure and loves purity and cleanliness.' He who boasts only of his pedigree will be more abominable near God than a black beetle that rolls on filth by its nose. The proud will not enter Paradise, nor a violent speaker. 'That person will not enter Paradise who has one atom of pride in his heart.' True modesty is the source of all virtues. All kinds of modesty are best. Humility and courtesy are acts of piety. Backbiting vivifies ablations and fastings. Abuse nobody; for the exercise of religious duties will not atone for the faults of an abusive tongue. Never utter a curse. It is unworthy of a Muslim to talk vainly. Speak what is good, he admonished, or remain silent. 'Much silence and good disposition, there are no two works better than those.' Envy is to be abjured, it consumes and des-

troys. The ill-tempered are God's enemies; they are far from Him. Be not angry, advised Mohammed. He is strong who withholds himself from anger. Suppression of effective anger merits divine reward. God is gentle and loves gentleness. A man cannot be a Muslim till his heart and tongue are pure.

The people among whom Mohammed came were nomadic, and were not so developed in social and domestic virtues. He therefore emphasised these virtues in clear voice. Yet his teachings have the value for all time to those whom it may concern. Their ethical and spiritual quality is universal—the hall-mark of all great teachings. Apropos domestic virtues he said: A man's first charity should be to his own family, if poor. God does not favour one who deserts his kith and kin. God's pleasure is a father's pleasure; and God's displeasure is in a father's displeasure. A man is bound to do good to his parents, although they may have injured him. The duty of a junior to a senior brother is as that of a child to his father. One who does good to his parents, looks after them with kindness and affection, gets a reward that equals the fruit of a properly performed pilgrimage. A virtuous wife is a man's best treasure. Wife-beating is denounced. The rights of women are sacred, they should be maintained. Children should be taught good manners—that is a fitter patrimony. No father has ever given his children anything better than good manners. Meet your brother with an open countenance. Let him be apprised in time of his vice so that he may mend it. A Moslem should be affectionate to little ones and respect the reputation of the old. Let not one speak ill of the dead. Respect people agreeable to their eminence. Being kind to the bad is to withhold them from badness. Forgive your servants seventy times. Give the labourer his wage before the perspiration is dry. He who visits the sick insures the mercy of God and heavenly bliss. Guests should be honoured. Do not turn the poor away, without giving them, if but half a date. That person is not a perfect Muslim who eats his fill and leaves his neighbour hungry. "Shall I tell you the worst amongst you? Those who eat alone and whip slaves, and give to nobody." Kindness must extend to all living things. One

should ride the dumb animals only when they are fit to be ridden; get off from them when they are tired. Whoever is kind to the creation, God is kind to him. "Do you love your Creator?—love your fellow-beings."

The following incident gives an insight into the heart of the Prophet. "A man came before the Rasul with a carpet and said, 'O Rasul, I passed through a wood and heard the voices of young birds; and I took and put them into my carpet; and their mother came and fluttered round my head, and I uncovered the young and the mother fell down upon them; then I wrapped them up in my carpet; and these are the young which I have.' Then the Rasul said, 'Put them down.' And when he did so their mother joined them; and Lord Mohammed said, 'Do you wonder at the affection of the mother towards her young? I swear by Him who hath sent me, verily God is more loving to His creatures than the mother to those young birds. Return them to the place from which ye took them, and let their mother be with them.' Kindness is a mark of faith and whoever has not kindness has no faith. To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful and to remove the wrongs of the injured are most excellent actions. A perfect Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe. God is not merciful to him who is not merciful to mankind. No one should oppress another. "If people do you good, you will do good to them; and if they oppress you, you will not oppress them." The greatest enemies of God are those who have entered into Islam and do acts of infidelity and who without cause shed blood of man. The greatest of crimes is to vex father and mother, to murder one's own species, to commit suicide and to swear to a lie.

According to Mohammed purity of speech and charity are Islam in a nut-shell. "When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; commit not fornication; be chaste; have no impure desires; withhold your hands from striking and taking that which is unlawful and bad. The best of God's servants are those who when seen remind of God; and the worst of God's servants are those who carry tales about, who do

mischief and separate friends, and seek for the defects of the good. The brotherhood in Islam is proverbial. All Muslims are as one person. "God is a unit and liketh unity." The slave that says his prayers is a brother to the Muslim. Mohammed commanded to obey his successor though he be a slave. Any service done to others comes under charity. Doing justice between two persons, answering questions with mildness, removing the thorns and stones that may cause inconvenience for another—all these are charity. Your smiling in your brother's face is charity. To feed a cat or a dog, or to plant a tree or sow a field from the yields of which birds, beasts and men may eat—certainly all these form charity. If one is not sore pressed by need one should not beg; even then he should beg of the virtuous. A rich or robust man should never beg. Begging is allowed only for an indigent person. "It is better for anyone of you," he said, "to take your rope and bring a bundle of wood upon your back and sell it, in which case God guardeth your honour, than to beg of people." But every Muslim must give alms. The least charity is to desist from doing harm to another.

Someone described Islam as the 'greatest of all temperance societies.' Although this may be true as far as Mohammed's project of moral reform goes, it must be said that the Prophet's influence did not stop with the improvement of manners. His spiritual vision and the divine command which he translated into life go to the heart of religion. All true religions start with a feeling of the insufficiency of this world. Love of the world is the root of all evil, said he. He repeated the words of the poet Labid: Know that everything is vanity save God. "My followers love me more than they do their parents and children." Cursed is the world and cursed is all that is in the world except the remembrance of God and that which aideth it. The world is a magician to be avoided. The world is a prison for the faithless and a paradise for the faithful. "Desire not the world and God will love you, and desire not what men have and they will love you." Be in this world like a traveller, or like a passer-on, and reckon yourselves as of the dead. Death is a favour to a Musselman. "My condition," said Mohammed, "is that of a man on horse-

back, who standeth under the shade of a tree, then leaveth it." The world is a prison and famine to the Muslim.

There is no monasticism in Islam, but Mohammed said: Poverty is my pride. It never happens poverty will become a cause of infidelity. It is difficult for a man laden with riches to climb the steep path that leads to bliss. So he prayed, "O Lord, keep me alive a poor man, and let me die poor, and raise me among the poor." Mohammed said that poverty would reach that man who loves him, quicker than a torrent to a sea. However, 'wealth properly employed is a blessing, and a man may lawfully increase it by honest means.' There is no monopoly in Islam.

Prayer is the key to heaven and the soul of religion. He to whom you pray is nearer than the neck of the camel on which you ride, he said. Everything has a polish; the polish for the heart is the remembrance of God. One should say his prayers standing; if not able, one may do so sitting or lying down. One must suppress his carnal desires before he asks of God. Mohammed's heart rejoiced in prayer more than in anything else. To facilitate prayer he enjoined fasts at least three times a month. More important is the general advice: "Kill not therefore your heart with excess of eating and drinking." Only a messenger of God could teach: "He who knoweth his own self knoweth God." The paradise of Islam is not a crude one as many think. "It is," according to the Prophet's description, "what the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor ever flashed across the mind of man." We shall conclude this review by citing the grand prayer which Mohammed addressed to the Almighty: "O Lord, grant to me the love of Thee; grant that I love those that love Thee; grant that I may do the deeds that win Thy love; make Thy love dearer to me than self, family or wealth."

From this cursory survey of the book, mostly in its own words, the preciousness of the collection is amply evidenced. The book is well produced with Index, Appendix and a short account of the life of Mohammed. However, the compiler's jaunty assertion in the preface that 'one will miss in this collection the hyperbolical teachings of other masters', can be endorsed as categorical only after one has made an

exhaustive study of the whole Ahadith and the recorded utterances of other masters. There is a nisprit in the saying 319 *l.* 3 and another in 292 *l.* 1. We recommend the book heartily.

**History of Modern Marathi Literature, 1800-1938:** *By Govinda Chinnaji Bhate, M.A. Price Rs. 8-0-0 Inland; and Rs. 15-0-0 abroad. Copies can be had of Dr. V. G. Bhate, M.B., B. S., Mahad (Dist. Kolaba).*

We have here, in a sumptuous volume of 745 Demy quarto pages, an elaborate history of Marathi literature of the British Period written in English, on modern lines, by one who has 35 years of educational experience as professor and principal, successively, of two colleges, and who has brought to bear on the work his long and indefatigable study of enormous material available not only in the premier Libraries of India where Marathi books are collected and conserved, but also in the British Museum Library and the India Office Library in Great Britain where he went specially for the purpose of securing for his work the designed exhaustiveness. Mr. Bhate's book is the first of its kind in Marathi, and it is not known whether there exists in any of the literatures of the spoken languages of India a work of this kind, with the possible exception of Dinesh Chandra Sen's History of Bengali Literature. The present work is written in English at the instance of the Librarian, India Office Library. This has laid the book under the serious handicap of excluding citations from works of the authors treated and the illustrations of literary tendencies discussed. To remove this defect—which is indeed a serious one since it reduces the work into a magnified 'descriptive catalogue'—the author is bringing out an exhaustive anthology of such pertinent passages as a companion to the present volume.

Just as in the case of most of the other spoken languages of India, in Marathi too, we can demarcate a clear division in the development of its literature into two epochs—the pre-British period and the British period. The first one, though extending over centuries, is distinguished only for a number of brilliant poetical works, mostly religious in their content, and are reverently remembered and studied against the

luminous backgrounds of their divine and saintly authors, whose spiritual and aesthetically devotional experiences mingled with the high literary exquisiteness they possess, have undoubtedly been a potent force in educating the feelings of the masses of the Maratha country for several centuries. Jnanesver, Namadev, Ekanath, Muktesvar, Tukaram, Raundas and others are the gems of this period. Since the elaborate treatment of this long period would require a separate book, the present author has only treated them very briefly at the opening just to indicate the pedigree of the Marathi language.

The second period has very distinct features. Introduction of printing and cheap and easy way of producing and distributing every form of literature, along with a tremendous spread of education and promotion of city life, have stimulated all literatures to an astounding degree during this period. The brilliant record which the Christian Missionaries have made during the early part of this period by their efforts in compiling lexicons and grammatical works and translating the Bible at tremendous cost and labour in almost all the languages of India, as well as the inspiration they gave in other directions,—although handicaps and prejudices often incapacitated them from making their efforts flawless and more valuable—requires the grateful recognition of any Indian, especially a literary historian. The present author has amply recognised this. By going through the pages of the book one again finds the whole story of the development of the English Literature for over 300 years after the invention of printing enacted over again in a miniature form—the same literary forms of dramas, operas, essays, novels, farces, criticisms, stories, periodicals, newspapers and the rest, developing just as in English, through their imitation, translation and assimilation with such variations as are suited to the needs of Indian life.

Mr. Bhate's work consists of fourteen chapters, of which the first three are introductory, dealing with a brief discussion of literature in general, the rise of Marathi into an expanding literature and the natural division of it into periods. The titles of the ensuing chapters are External Attempts, Indigenous Attempts, Translations, Status of

Marathi in the University, The Romantic Novel, Makers of Classical Marathi, Great Novelists, The Literature for a Variety of Tastes, New Forms of Literature, Recent Phenomenal Growth, and Future of Marathi Literature, respectively. In these chapters the author gives biographical notes on the lives of scores of writers major and minor, and descriptions of their known works. There are, of course, omissions and, perhaps, some minor errors which are, certainly to be condoned in a work of this type completed single-handed. One would have wished a more thorough work, though not so bulky, with greater attention to its quality. Unlike the political history of a race, its literary history can be made always a pleasant work of art. Making sufficient allowance for the alien medium, the present work does not come up to the highest standard either in this respect or in the appraisal of the works described. It is a pleasure to read the history of a literature as it takes one through the garden of literary flower-beds creating in the reader taste and enthusiasm for the works and the personalities behind them. However, being one of the first attempts, it has its great value in paving the way for others, and also in disclosing to non-Marathis the scope and depth of that language in its recent developments. We therefore recommend without hesitation this volume to all libraries that have a place for books dealing with the languages of India.

**The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo:** By Nalini Kanta Gupta. Copies can be had at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pages 57, Price As. 8.

This small brochure is a welcome addition to the mass of literature that is fast growing around the silent saint. Sri Aurobindo's is undoubtedly a great creative mind but unfortunately his writings form tough reading, as they are mostly couched in a heavy style. Books written by students of his philosophy have not much improved the situation, as they too have not achieved that amount of clarity which would enable the ordinary reader to understand his philosophy easily.

The book under review, free as it is from technicalities and coming as it does from the pen of one of the intimate fol-

lowers, can dispel much misunderstanding and ignorance.

The book contains four chapters, two dealing with the particular variety of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, one dealing with his school of thought and the other with his interpretation of the Gita. The first chapter represents Yoga as an art of life which makes life "a perfect work of beauty, pure in its lines, faultless in its rhythm, replete with strength, iridescent with light, vibrant with delight." The second chapter represents the Yoga as Nature's own Yoga; because we are assured that Nature, which has always tried to evolve higher types of beings in the past and succeeded in producing man in the end, is again in the travail of a greater birth with the conscious co-operation of man. The third chapter tells us that it is "not at all a school, least of all a mere 'school of thought,' that is growing round Sri Aurobindo. It is rather the nucleus of a new life that is to come." The fourth chapter enlightens us about the novelty of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Gita which spiritualises action in contradistinction to the emphasis of the neo-spiritualists on activism, and which preaches the doctrine of Purushottama, containing "the dual reality of Brahman and the world" in contradiction to the Sankarite "stress upon a spiritual and a religious, which meant therefore in the end, an other-worldly discipline." Sri Aurobindo's interpretation according to our author is "instinct with something of the Gita's own Mantra-shakti." It may be pointed out that however attractive might be the scheme outlined above, it will not be wise to discard established philosophies of life that have proved their worth in the course of ages.

The book is nicely got up and printed.

**Initiation into Yoga:** By Sri Krishna Prem. Publisher: The Ananda Publishing House, 3-A, Louther Road, Allahabad. Price As. 6 or 6d.

Yoga has fascinated and attracted modern people more than any other ancient system of thought and discipline; and it has come to mean many things to many people. Cheap pamphlets, attractive advertisements and mysterious Gurus have played havoc with the careers of hundreds of thoughtless people eager to discover a

short cut to health, beauty and power or to the speedy attainment of God. There is ample room for fraud and charlatany in this mysterious field, and those who teach simple psychological and moral truths that are emphasised in authoritative texts and verified by the lives of utterly unselfish spiritual men are likely to be put down as commonplace since they have no astounding promise to make. The above booklet is pithy and thoughtful and deserves to be read and remembered carefully by all whose interest in Yoga is practical. Those who are anxious to start the practice of Yoga straight away as soon as they have read a book on the subject would remember that "the books contain a number of black marks on white paper (or the equivalent) and what these marks signify to us depends upon the ideas in our own minds and they in turn upon the experiences we have gone through. Without having lived through the appropriate experience it is quite impossible for us to understand in any real sense, the meaning of what is written in any book" (p.4). This is only too true. Hence the necessity of seeking a genuine teacher whose competency is tested by long and close contact before surrendering to his instructions.

Understanding is the first thing needed before any practice is begun. The author rightly says ".....men are fundamentally lazy. We want some one to do everything for us, to transform us into Yogis without our having to go through the long and painful struggles that are necessary. Consequently we are only too apt to feel

that if a Guru cannot do that for us it is he and not we who are to blame." It is rightly said that a good deal of self-effort and sincere yearning are required if one has to derive any benefit by contact with a Guru. The first and foremost requirement on the path of Yoga is disciplining thought and desires. Anyone who has not achieved a fairly good amount of success in that direction would do well to get it first before taking to Yoga. If thought is trained to follow its proper laws it is capable of revealing truth and becoming the rudder of the soul, "enabling the latter to cleave a passage through the waters of desires, regardless of their hostile currents." "One habit in particular must be carefully checked and that it is the habit of allowing the mind to run on aimlessly from one thing to another, of letting it take sudden flights from one subject to another and then back to the first without any control at all." These and other observations are really helpful. We wish a wide circulation for this book.

**Towards the Light:** *By Nalini Kanta Gupta, Published by Culture Publishers, Calcutta.*

This small book is a collection of a few epigrammatic observations by Mr. Gupta on various subjects such as, Love and Aspiration, Divine and Its Help, Desire and Atonement, etc. These aphorisms apparently represent the attitude of the school of thought to which the author belongs, towards the above-mentioned topics, though many of them have a wider outlook also. The book is interesting.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

**Ancient Wisdom of India appreciated in the New World**

**SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA'S WORK IN AMERICA**

*(Sent by Gertrude Oldendorph, Ferguson, Missouri, U.S.A.)*

"You accept the world, but deny the soul. The world is real to you because you see it. How can the 'seen' be real if there is no 'seer'? The seer is the soul, the knower in you," proclaimed Swami Satprakashananda in one of his early addresses in St. Louis last November.

The Swami, a representative of the Ramakrishna Order of India, came to St. Louis to preach the sublime truths of the Vedanta on October 13, 1938. The fact that the Swamis of this Order came to America at the invitation of the Americans and that Vedanta Centers have been growing in different parts of the United States for nearly half a century shows that the ancient wisdom of India is desired and appreciated in the New World.

Prior to leaving for America, Swami Satprakashananda was in charge of the Ramakrishna Mission Centre in Delhi, the

capital of India. Since his arrival in this country in March, 1937, the Swami worked at the Vedanta Center in Providence, R.I., with Swami Akhilananda, its founder, for over a year. During this period he also visited Washington, D.C., and preached the message of the Vedanta several weeks in the nation's capital. A short account of its first year's activities has already been published.

In July, 1938, at the invitation of Swami Prabhavananda, the leader of the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles, Swami Satprakashananda went to California to attend the dedication of the Society's new temple at the Vivekananda Home of Hollywood. A public meeting was held to celebrate the occasion, on the 10th of July. The five guest Swamis spoke on different aspects of the Vedanta before an assembly of about 300 persons. From Hollywood, Swami Satprakashananda twice visited the Ananda Ashrama (Vedanta Center) of La Crescenta. On Sunday, the 17th of July, he was invited to speak at the Temple of the Universal Spirit there. The same evening the Swami spoke at the new temple in Hollywood on "Self-mastery."

While in Hollywood, the Swami received an invitation from Swami Ashokananda, the head of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco. A Summer Retreat of San Francisco Center was being built on Lake Tahoe under the direction of Swami Ashokananda, who was spending his vacation in Tahoe supervising the work. On August the 8th Swami Satprakashananda participated with five other Swamis of the Order in the opening ceremony of this happy Retreat on the lake.

From San Francisco the Swami twice visited the memorable Shanti Ashrama (Peace Retreat) in San Antoine Valley and stayed there about a week.

At the commencement of the new session, the Swami was asked to address the congregation at the Hindu Temple of San Francisco on September 14 and 21. Both the speeches met with warm appreciation.

From San Francisco the Swami came to Portland on September 28. The next evening a reception was arranged at the Vedic Home by Swami Devatmananda, the leader of the Center. Swami Satprakashananda gave a short after-dinner address. The audience was very appreciative. The Swami then participated in the worship of

the Divine Mother performed at the Center for four days according to the Hindu rite. In the morning of October 2 he spoke on "The Divine Mother" in a sylvan grove, amidst natural surroundings on the woody heights of the new hermitage of the Portland Vedanta Center. The same evening he addressed the public in the Masonic Hall under the auspices of the Vedanta Society. The Swami also gave two impressive class-talks at the Vedic Home.

On October 7 he came to Seattle to meet Swami Vividishananda, who was organizing a Vedanta Center there. At the Sunday meeting of October 9, at the Hotel Mayflower, Swami Satprakashananda was asked to speak on "Subconscious Mind and Supereconscious Vision." The next day he took leave of Swami Vividishananda and started for St. Louis.

Within a few days of his arrival in this city the Swami was able to make friends and start the work with their help at Hotel Melbourne on Sunday, the 23rd of October, 1938. The five opening lectures delivered in the course of eight days on well-chosen subjects, such as "The Masters and the Mystic Wisdom of India," "Yoga and the Western Mind," "Karma and Reincarnation," "Mind: Conscious, Subconscious, and Supereconscious," served to introduce the Western hearers to Hindu mysticism, philosophy, and psychology. The universality of the teachings, their rationality and practicability struck the audience. Then followed a course of six lessons on "The Practice of Yoga," with special emphasis on mental discipline and meditation. The lessons began on the 1st of November. Three lessons were given each week. A full synopsis of the lessons covering the whole process of Yoga was circulated ahead of time. The suitability of certain aspects of Yoga to modern life and conditions was clearly explained. The lessons aroused so much interest that the Swami had to repeat the whole course during the month.

The discourse on Yoga occupied the week-days, while on Sundays the Swami gave public lectures on "The Soul's Secret Chamber," "What Happens After Death?" "Secret of Poise and Power," and "Religion in Modern Life." The lucid exposition of the profound spiritual truths and of their bearing on modern life and

thought made a deep impression on the audience.

As some of the students evinced interest in the regular study of the Vedanta, weekly classes to teach the Upanishads and the Gita on Tuesdays and Fridays respectively were started at the end of November. A daily noon meditation was also begun about the same time.

In December the Swami gave public lectures twice a week in addition to class talks and meditations. The subjects as well as their treatment were very appealing. The following topics may be mentioned among others: "Self-control and self-expression," "Body, mind, and soul," "The Practice of Concentration," "Secular and Spiritual Life," "The Mystic Word." On Christmas Day the Swami spoke on "The Blessed Life of Jesus." On December 16 he had been invited to speak before the St. Louis Health Club at the occasion of their annual function in the American Hotel. As his subject he chose "The Psychological Factors in Physical Health."

In January the weekly lectures were restricted to Sunday, the Thursday lecture started in December being dropped. The following subjects, of wide interest, were ably dealt with: "What can Religion do for Me," "The Meaning of the Present World Crisis," "Mind: Abnormal and Supernormal," and "The Rhythm of Life."

In commemoration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday a special meditation and worship were conducted on January 17. The following evening the Swami gave an inspiring discourse on "Swami Vivekananda's Message to America." On both these days the audience was entertained with refreshments prepared by the Swami. The birthday of Swami Brahmananda was similarly observed on January 22 and 24.

A novel feature of the work in February was an illustrated lecture on India, depicting various aspects of Indian life. The slides were received from Swami Vividishananda of Seattle.

To celebrate the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on February 21, a special meditation and worship were conducted at noon and a vivid portrayal of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings was given in the evening. The Hindu food served on the occasion was enjoyed by all.

On February 26 the Swami gave an illuminating talk on "Heredity and Rebirth,"

bringing out the facts that the biological view of heredity leaves the moral and spiritual issues unexplained and that unless the idea of hereditary transmission be modified and supplemented by the doctrine of reincarnation, materialism is the sole alternative. The lectures on "India's Spiritual Message to America" and "The Power of Suggestion" given during the month were equally instructive. "The world even at its highest and best cannot be the goal. It is but the means to an end beyond itself. We should live in the world in order to transcend the world," declared the Swami while speaking on "India's Spiritual Message to America."

Another interesting lecture on India illustrated with motion-pictures was given in March. Swami Nikhilananda of New York, who took the pictures during his visit to India last year, kindly supplied the films.

On March 19 a lecture on "Sri Ramakrishna, the Mystic Saint of Modern India" was given in commemoration of his birthday. In his speech on "The Inner Resources" the Swami brought home to the audience the fact that the solution of the problems of individual and collective life rests on the proper manipulation of the inner powers. The lecture on "The Spiritual Problems of the Modern Man" cleared many misconceptions of religion in the modern age.

On the first Sunday in April the Swami spoke on "How to Overcome Death." It proved to be a real Easter sermon. His lecture on "India and Her People" at the International Institute on the 16th of April, before an open-house audience of about 300, representing nearly thirty different nationalities, was designated by this Institute as "a skilful and scholarly talk." The other lectures given during the month on "Work and Its Secret," "The Practice of Meditation," "Vedanta and Modern Life," and "Reason and Emotion: How to Harmonize Them" were illuminating as well as exhortative.

To commemorate the birthday of Lord Buddha a lecture was given in May on "Buddha and His teachings." On May 8, the day following, the Swami spoke on "The Civic and National Ideals of India" before the Kiwanis Club of Normandy. After the talk the Swami explained the Caste System of India in answer to a ques-

tion by the minister of the Normandy Presbyterian Church, where the meeting was held. The other lectures given during the month were on "The Power of Thought," "The Art of Spiritual Living," and "The Meaning of Good and Evil." In his lecture on "The Meaning of Good and Evil" the Swami discussed the various theological and philosophical views on this problem, and it became evident that the only satisfactory solution of the problem was reached by the Vedanta. Thus observed the Swami: "Good and evil are interdependent in this universe of duality. They are like the obverse and reverse of a single coin, or like the two sides of a sheet of paper—rub one side away with a rubber, and the other side vanishes with it. One cannot have the one without the other. To go beyond evil, we must go beyond good. First overcome evil by good, then transcend good to reach the goal, the Absolute."

In June the Swami took up the following subjects: "The Power of Destiny," "How to quiet the mind," "In Quest of God," and "The Abundant Life." The meetings were well attended in spite of summer heat, and the Swami in his lecture on "The Power Destiny" referred to the different ideas of determinism prevailing in mythology, theology, philosophy, psychology, and science, maintained free will, and explained predestination by the Law of Karma. "The Abundant Life" was an inspiring concluding sermon of the session.

On account of the hot weather the Sunday lectures had to be suspended from July on. But the Swami did not discontinue the other activities. The week-day classes and the daily noon meditation which had been conducted all along since their start are still going on uninterrupted. The Sunday lectures are to be resumed in autumn.

Throughout his stay in St. Louis the Swami has granted interviews to men and women that have sought his advice for the solution of their personal problems. He has also visited several American homes, where the members and their friends have enjoyed his lively conversation and ennobling presence. He was also invited to a social gathering of the American League of Pen Women, where a brief

address was given by him on "The Art of Life."

#### Swami Ghanananda in Mauritius

Mauritius is a British Crown Colony, over 700 sq. miles in area, noted for its sugar industry. There are over 2½ lacs of Hindus in the Island. The Swami was deputed by the Headquarters of the Mission to work for their spiritual and social welfare in early July. He landed on the Island on the 20th of July and was given a rousing reception by the public in general and by the Arya Sabha. Swami Ghanananda joined the Mission about two decades back and has been working successfully in India in various responsible positions for spreading the ideals of the Mission and the Order.

The following is the text of the address presented by the Hindu Mission Committee, Port-Louis, on 30th July 1939, to Swami Ghanananda:—

Revered Swamiji,

We, in the name of the organizing committee, welcome your worthy and venerable presence among us with unbounded joy, and thank you heartily for having so readily responded to our invitation to come over here, and implant in the hearts of the Hindus an abidingly active love for their religion, culture and language.

The very instant we took contact with you, we had the pleasure to find in you the spiritual leader for whom we had been longing ever since the inception of our movement, nay a true representative of the Ramakrishna Mission and a worthy follower of its founder, Swami Vivekananda, the gifted messenger of Ramakrishna, who was the first Hindu Sunnyasin to cross the seas like the Buddhist monks of old and spread world-wide the wisdom of Ancient India as taught by his saintly Guru, with the result that today the Ramakrishna Mission has centres established not only in all the Provinces of India, in Ceylon, Burma, Straits Settlements, Fiji, but also in England and the Continent, in the United States and Argentina.

Your astounding knowledge of, and soul-stirring love for, the manifold beauties and potentialities of our religion and culture have already imparted the certainty that the object we daringly set before us, we mean the object of providing the commu-

nity, for some time at least, with the spiritual guidance of a Hindu missionary hailing from the world-famed Ramakrishna Mission, will be productive of results conducive to the moral and material uplift of our people.

Besides the varied benefit we shall certainly derive from your teachings, there is no doubt that your presence, here, will afford us the living touch linking us with our past and all its multitudinous glories which must needs awaken in us that national pride so indispensable for upholding one's own culture and one's own religion.

We assure you, before concluding, that you will find your stay in our Island Home agreeable and your work appealing, while we revel in the thought that with your advent here, a new era has dawned on us, which will soon witness a general awakening and regeneration among us Hindus in all the spheres of life.

We remain,

Revered Swamiji,

Your most obedient servants,

M. SANGEELEE . . . . . V. GOVINDEN  
Secretary . . . . . President.

The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.

*Short statement of the activities during 1938.*

The activities of the Home during the year 1938 were under the following heads:

*Indoor General Hospital:* There are 145 beds in the various wards. The total number of cases admitted was 1,832 of whom 1,170 were cured and discharged, 209 were relieved and discharged, 194 were discharged otherwise, 134 died and 125 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The total number of ghat and roadside cases admitted was 385. The daily average of indoor cases was 110.8. The total number of surgical cases in the Indoor Hospital was 387 of which 155 were major cases.

*Refuge for aged and invalid men:* There were 4 permanent inmates in this refuge, during the year.

*Refuge for aged and invalid women:* In this refuge there were 23 inmates during the year.

*Refuge for paralytic patients:* During the year under review in all 20 paralytic

cases were accommodated of which 2 were provided for under the Lachmi Narai paralytic fund.

*Chandri Bibi Dharamsala Fund:* During the year, 209 men and women were given shelter and food under this head. The annual income of Rs. 273 accruing from this fund, being insufficient, had to be supplemented with money from other sources.

*Out-door Dispensaries:* The total number of new cases treated during the year at the out-door dispensaries of the Home was 83,483 as against 64,420 of the previous year and the total number of repeated cases was 1,38,058 as against 1,10,776 of the previous year. These include 21,453 new and 50,308 repeated cases treated at the branch out-door dispensary of the Home at Shivala. The daily average attendance was 607 and the total number of surgical cases was 1,951.

*Out-door help to invalids and helpless ladies of respectable families:* Under this head 202 persons received weekly and monthly out-door relief and it cost Rs. 2,746-5-6 in cash (including Rs. 175 of yearly interest, derived from the Audhar Chandra Das Charity Fund especially constituted for money relief) and 118 mds. 17 srs. 4 chts. of rice and Atta, besides blankets and clothings.

*Special and occasional relief:* Under this head 1,280 persons were given help in the shape of either books for students, food for stranded travellers or similar relief as occasion demanded.

*Finance:* During the year under review under the General Fund receipts were Rs. 38,009-3-5 and expenditure Rs. 42,664-10-3; under the Building Fund receipts Rs. 6,609-8-9, and expenditure Rs. 2,823-2-9; under the T. B. Sanatorium Fund receipts Rs. 2,050-0-0 and expenditure Rs. 767-5-0; and under the N. C. Das Estate receipts Rs. 526-2-0 and expenditure Rs. 1,768-7-0.

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama,  
Lucknow, 1937—1938

The Sevashrama presents the following Report for the years 1937 and 1938.

In the outdoor Dispensary the total number of patients treated was 2,07,206 as against 1,65,866 of the corresponding years of 1935 and 1936. Of these the number of new patients was 52,981. Besides, eight widows of respectable families, who had

none to support them and who could not go out either for work or to beg, received monthly allowances. Monthly allowances were also granted to six poor, old and invalid persons. Ninety persons were given temporary help in cash or in kind.

The Sevashrama maintains a primary school where education is imparted to the boys of the poor and the labouring class. Books and other requisites are supplied free to poor and deserving students. The number of boys on roll on the 31st December 1938 was 69. The Sevashrama also maintains a Library and Free Reading Room. The Library contains 1832 books. The Library is open to the public and during the period under report 1215 books were issued.

During the year 1937 the total amount of receipt including opening balance was Rs. 7,922-13-1 of which Rs. 5,196-14-0 were spent leaving a closing balance of Rs. 2,725-14-4. During the year 1938 the receipts including balance was Rs. 6,633-6-2 and expenditure was Rs. 3,903-1-3 leaving a balance of Rs. 2,730-4-11. The Sevashrama is a rapidly growing institution which is of great help to a large number of poor and suffering Narayanas. But with growth the financial responsibility of the institution also grows. Hence at least Rs. 1,50,000 is necessary for improvement of the various departments of its activities enumerated above. We hope this help will be forthcoming from the generous and kind-hearted public.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama,  
Asansol, 1938.

This Ashrama was made a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission on 5th December, 1938. Before that it was managed by the local people under the guidance of the Mission. The Report under review is for the year 1938. During the year under report daily classes were held in the Ashrama. Occasional meetings were arranged when senior members of the Order delivered lectures. Birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and some

of the other direct disciples of the Master were observed. Durga Puja was also celebrated. The Ashrama maintains one Homoeopathic Dispensary where 3,107 patients were given free treatment. Sick people were nursed and several dead bodies were cremated by the inmates of the Ashrama when necessary. For the spread of education the Ashrama maintains a free night school, a library and reading room and a Students' Home. The total receipts of the year with last year's balance came upto Rs. 6,321-9-11 and total disbursements amounted to Rs. 1,689-12-6 leaving a balance of Rs. 4,631-13-5. The total receipts of the building fund was Rs. 889-11-0 of which Rs. 862-11-3 were spent leaving a balance of Rs. 28-15-9. The Ashrama is in need of (1) A Prayer Hall (2) A Dispensary Building (3) A School Building (4) A Library Building (5) A Boarding House. At least 10 bighas of land will be required for the construction of these buildings. The approximate cost of the land and buildings will be Rs. 50,000.

#### The Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore.

The Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore, was established as a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission with its Headquarters at Belur, in 1928. The Mission is at present conducting four schools duly registered under the regulations of the Education Department. The Mission maintains a library and a reading room which are open to the public. The financial position continues to be satisfactory. The credit balance on 31st December, 1938, was \$2566.63 as compared with \$2182.71 on 31st December, 1937. The Mission is managed by a Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission with the help of a local committee. During the last decade of its existence the Mission carried on preaching work throughout Malaya. Invited by the public, the representatives of the Mission visited different parts of Malaya from time to time, to spread the universal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda by means of lectures, classes, discourses and lantern lectures in English and Tamil.

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RENUNCIATION

The spirit of reverence and loyalty to parents represented by the extracts quoted in the last issue is here widened into a holy passion to serve other beings, renouncing everything personal.

उद्देगवारिभवसागरबुद्धेऽस्मिन् ; कालानिलाकुलितकर्मलतापुग्रणे ।  
 मायावधूनयनविश्रमसंविभागे ; पुंसां क एष वपुषि स्थिरताभिमानः ॥ १ ॥

तरङ्गन्तो भोगाश्वकितहरिणीलोचनचलाः  
 क्षणे लक्ष्या लक्ष्मीर्जनजलदविश्वोतनतडित् ।

शरीरगन्जेपे बालातपचपलरां नववयः  
 क्षयं यान्ति क्षिप्रं भवमरुते जीवितकणः ॥ २ ॥

अहो स्वाक्षन्यविष्ठेदस्तुभङ्गः सुखशयः ।  
 सेवा जगति जन्मनां दुःखे दुःखपरम्परा ॥ ३ ॥

अहो विभवलुभ्यानां परसन्तापशीतलाः ।  
 स्वसुखायैवधावन्ति वृशंसचरिता धियः ॥ ४ ॥

सापायस्य व्यरुतनसरणौ शीर्थमाणस्य नित्यं  
 दुःखोश्वासैः प्रतिहतवृत्तेः स्मर्थमाणस्य पश्चात् ।

सोऽयं सद्यः सुखलवधिया क्लेशपाकस्य पुंसो  
 भोगस्यार्थे बत बत परप्राणहिंसाप्रयत्नः ॥ ५ ॥

किञ्चिच्चत्सङ्कोचकुटिलः प्रयाति स्थविरः शैनः ।  
 हारिं यौवनमणि वीक्षमाण इवावनौ ॥ ६ ॥

नोक्तं किञ्चित् परहितयुतं न श्रुतं धर्मयुक्तं  
 नैव ग्रातं कुशलकुम्भं सत्यरूपं न दृष्टम् ।

नैव स्पृष्टं शमपदमिति व्यक्तमासकृतचिन्ता-  
 विश्रान्तोऽयं वहति सहसा निश्चलत्वं गतायुः ॥ ७ ॥

हस्ताकृष्टविष्णुकणभृन्मस्तकन्यस्तमूर्त्युः  
 कण्ठाब्द्वोत्कटविषलतापलवालोलमालः ।

दीपाकारप्रकरणहनं गाहते दुर्गमार्ती  
 संसारेऽस्मिन् विषयनिचये सप्रमोदः प्रमादी ॥ ८ ॥

जागर्ति संसारेष्वे मनीषी मोहान्धकारे स्वपिति प्रमत्तः ।  
 प्रजागरो जीवितमेव लोके मृतस्य सुसत्य च कोविमेदः ॥ १ ॥  
 स कोऽपि सत्कर्मविपाकजन्मा वन्यो विवेकः प्रशमाभिवेकः ।  
 यस्य प्रभावाद्विरतस्युहाणां त्याज्यैव रत्नाकरमेखला भूः ॥ १० ॥

दृष्टं मुष्ठिनिविष्टपारदक्षणाकरं नराणां धनं  
 धन्योऽसौ यशासहाक्षयपदं यशस्य विद्योतते ।  
 दीनानाथगणार्पणोपकरणीभूतप्रभूतश्रियः  
 पुण्यारामविहारचैत्यभगवद्विम्बप्रतिष्ठादिभिः ॥ ११ ॥

एषां ब्रह्मविहारश्च चत्वारः सत्वशालिनाम् ।  
 करुणामुदितोपेक्षा भैत्रीचेति परिग्रहः ॥ १२ ॥

क्लेदस्यन्दिनि निन्दिते प्रतिदिनं क्षासक्षयस्यन्दिनि  
 स्नेहः कोऽयमपायधार्मिन मलिने मिद्याशरीरे तृणाम् ।  
 एकैव सृहणीयतास्य यदिदं पुण्यैः क्वचित् कस्यचित्  
 किञ्चिद्वीक्ष्य कदाचिदार्तिसमये त्राणाय सशश्यति ॥ १३ ॥

धन्यास्ते परिपूर्णं पुण्यं निधयः सद्गमं सम्बोधिताः  
 ज्ञानोदयगुरुपदेशमहिमप्राप्तप्रभावोदयाः ।  
 गेहप्राक्षणलीलया बहुतरक्लेशोप्रसन्नापक्षत्  
 यैः संसार विसार मारवमहामार्गः समुलङ्घयते ॥ १४ ॥

सन्तर्साऽस्मिन् खरतरमहस्तपारसंसारमार्गे  
 पापं पापं त्यजत जनताः सक्ततीवानुतापम्  
 पुण्यं पुण्यं कुरुत सततं पुण्यपीयूपसिक्ताः  
 पुण्यक्षायातहृतलभुवः श्रीतलाः पुण्यभाजाम् ॥ १५ ॥

तेषामशोच्यं स्पृहणीयमेव जन्मप्रशामोचितमुन्नतानाम् ।  
 भैत्रीपवित्राणि मनांसि येषां सद्गमंशुद्धानि च जीवितानि ॥ १६ ॥

Strange indeed is the conceit of man who thinks that his body is a permanent entity—the body which is a formation of foam on the agitated ocean of Samsara (round of birth and death), the body which is the terminal blossom on the twig of Karma waving in the wind of time ready to drop, the body which shares the fickleness of the looks of an illusory damsel (1). The pleasures that approach man in wave-like succession are as fleeting as the tremble in the eyes of a frightened doe; wealth, shining for a moment, is just like the flash of a lightning that illuminates the cloud of humanity; the transient play of youth is only the hue of morning light imparted to the lotus of the human body, doomed to pass off in a trice. The pearly drop of life, alas! evaporates on the arid bank of Samsara in a moment's time (2). Ah! life here for all beings is a train of misery—deprival of freedom, degeneration of body, diminution of happiness and permanent servitude! (3). Indeed it is a pity that man, driven by greed of possession, makes cruel designs and derives pleasure coolly by harassing others,

and persistently endeavours to secure his own enjoyment. (4). In fact, man has his full cup of misery: he is exposed to innumerable risks; he is being disintegrated day by day on the road of suffering; his fortitude is constantly upset by the gale of sorrows; he pines over loss and sorrow even after they are over; at the face of all these, efforts are made by him to injure beings for grabbing others' goods with the sole motive of momentary pleasures. A hundred pity! (5).

Lo, the old man trudges on slowly, shrunken and bent over, with gaze directed towards the ground, searching as it were the jewel of youth lost by him. (6) "Not a word calculated to benefit others was uttered! Not a word of righteousness was listened to! The flower of goodness was not at all smelt! Nor was there the least touch of a state of inner peace and calm!"—Evidently wrapped in this remorseful absorption the corpse lies in perpetual rest, when life has ebbed away. (7) That heedless dullard who proceeds exultantly through the hard path of transmigratory existence teeming with sensuous luxuries, plays with a triple-headed viper; he courts death with his head; he slips round his neck a garland of a furiously venomous creeper; he enters into a bed of live cinders. (8) At this residence of Samsara a self-controlled, intelligent man is wide-awake; while a negligent one falls deeply into sleep in the night of delusion. To live in this world is to be vigilant always. (We live only so long as we are awake); what difference is there between a man asleep and one dead? (9).

Now, discrimination is engendered somehow by reflection—discrimination worthy of honour and surrounded by tranquillity. Through its power desires cease and at that stage the sea-girt earth itself, if it happens to be a possession, one is ready to renounce. (10). For, after all, it is observed that man's wealth is like a quantity of mercury grasped in one's fist. If the shining door to the Imperishable State is open for man along with a good name on earth, through the endowment of his immense riches for serving the poor and helpless, for laying out public gardens and monasteries, for establishing temples, and consecrating images of deities, and other services—then such a man is indeed to be congratulated. (11). These virtuous, energetic souls who have renounced all, have no possession except the four Brahma-abidings or highest mental developments, namely, compassion, gladness, poise and friendliness. (12). Why should there be such fondness for this false, filthy body on the part of man?—a body despicable and flowing over with secretions, a body which is but the abode of all troubles and wasting daily with every breath! If at all there is anything desirable regarding it, that is only this: In some place, at some time, through one's religious merits one uses one's body to save and serve someone when he is plunged in suffering. (13). Noble indeed are they who are a brimming treasure of virtue, who are informed with the good rule,

and who are beaming with the noble influence derived from the spiritual initiation received from Teachers of ripe wisdom. The dreary desert of extensive Samsara, terrible with a multitude of diverse sufferings, is easily crossed over by them in sport, just as one may walk across a courtyard of his house. (14). O men, with deep repentance give up all sin incidental to the journey in this intensely heated desert path of Samsara. Drenched in the ambrosia of virtuous deeds, always be intent on doing good work. The virtuous souls are like a prolific tree casting a cool shade of virtue and holiness beneath. (15). None needs to feel sorry for the lives of such; it is highly covetable for all—lives of those who have taken birth in a manner suitable for embracing renunciation and tranquillity. These exalted ones possess mind purified by friendly love; and their lives are hallowed by excellent righteousness. (16).

—Avadanakalpalata.

## THE SON OF MAN

AFTER patient researches for several centuries, historical scholarship has not been able to fix the exact and precise date of Christ's nativity. About the fifth century Church fixed the 25th of December to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, very much as we have a Jayanti, or day of celebration, in memory of Gita or Valmiki or Kalidasa. Whatever might have been the precise date of the advent, irrecoverable though it is, Christmas is an annually recurring reminder to all who care to cherish the memory of one who was a messenger of love and peace, and who has deserved homage from all humanity. The soul-stirring outpourings of devotion, pious oratory of the church and multifarious artistic creations occasioned by the sacred season all over the Christian world for centuries reveal the divine personality that has illumined a selfish and callous world for about two millenniums.

### I

It may be, the contemporary Jews looked upon Jesus only as a magician excommunicated by the Sanhedrin, if one is to believe the Talmud; the Encyclopedists saw in him only a charlatan; Renan only an amiable Rabbi, Socinus the highest of men. But, "If I, as an oriental, have to worship Jesus of Nazareth," said Swami Vivekananda in one of his addresses, "there is only one way left to me—that is, to worship him as God and nothing else. Have we no right to worship him in that way, do you mean to say? If we bring him to our own level and simply pay him a little respect, as a great man, why should we worship him at all? Our scriptures say, 'These great children of Light, who manifest the Light themselves, they being worshipped, become as it were, one with us and we become one with them.' This union with the Divine through

them must evidently have been the meaning in mind when Jesus said, "Whoever receives me receives not me but Him who sent me." We become one with them by assimilating into our lives the truth they have taught. The great Christian saints therefore had inscribed in their hearts the grand motto: *Vita tua via Nostra*—Thy life is our way.

Jesus, the word, has originally come from Hebrew *Jehoshua* meaning "Jehovah is salvation," signifying that Jesus came to save his people from their sins. Christ, originally a title, signified the "anointed one," *i.e.*, consecrated in a recognised way to be the King, Prophet and priest. Later on the two words blended and passed as one name separately or together. Jesus was born probably in 4 B.C. and was crucified on March 31, 30 A.D. The major part of his life was spent in extreme seclusion. The short period of his public life has given a grand revelation of God by his person, presence, life and teachings. Our grandest attempts to grasp or picture the divine attributes and power cannot even imperfectly approach what is revealed in the lives of these Godmen. Hence it is that they are our 'way.'

## II

The birth of Jesus is ascribed to a miraculous act of God, and about his early infancy, childhood and youth our knowledge is next to nothing. We learn from the Gospel that he did as his parents told him and that he "increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." We are also told that "the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the favour of God was

on him." He must have learned his father's trade to support himself as well as his mother and brothers. Although he had not the literary training of the learned class, he could read and write and was conversant with the books of the Prophets and the Psalms. From his utterances we get ample evidence for his close familiarity with Nature, his knowledge of men of all classes and their manners and the wonderful gift of keen observation, reflection and alertness that he must have developed from childhood. His future greatness gleams through the simple picture we get in S. Luke where the young boy is presented seated among learned men in the Holy Temple both "hearing and asking questions." His answer to the interrogations of his parents, who discovered him there after the temporary loss, is equally significant.

At the age of eighteen Jesus comes out from his village home to be baptised by his ascetic kinsman and prophet John preaching 'repentance.' Jesus was inaugurated into his spiritual ministry by this symbolic act of moral purification—sinless though he was—inorder that the world might know the fact that a great religious Messiah comes not to destroy the existing order but to fulfil the law and the prophets. Jesus undoubtedly taught on direct divine authority; but the ancient law supplied the setting for his new teaching. In the spiritual history of man this is repeated—Krishna and Buddha and Sankara were no exceptions.

Baptism opened a new chapter in the life of Jesus. No more he returned to the avocation of a joiner; the new vista of spiritual life lured him into solitude and in the region of

Quarantine, in the desert of Jericho he underwent the 'dark night of his soul' preceding illumination. Physical exhaustion, spiritual pride, unhallowed ambition—none of these could contaminate his immaculate mind. At last he emerged gloriously victorious, strengthened by divine Grace.

Jesus returned to the ford of Jordan and entered his spiritual ministry; one after another disciples joined him—Andrew and John and Simon and Philip and the others, all pure and warm-hearted young men. According to modern researches Jesus' public activity extended about a period of only eighteen months. He performed a multitude of miracles and several preaching tours bringing spirituality to all who were thirsty for the waters of eternal life. The chief events of this period may be rapidly passed over. He began his miracles by turning water into wine at a wedding banquet. On the famous festival day of the Jews, the Passover, he cleansed the Holy Temple of Jerusalem, which was to be a house of prayer for all nations, of its desecrating traffic, in fulfilment of the ancient prophecy—an act which might have incited the Jewish priesthood to jealousy and anger. He therefore retired to Judaea from Jerusalem giving his disciples power to baptise and heal. After the imprisonment of John, Jesus withdrew to Galilee and never, it seems, he returned to his birth-place. His preachings were publicly done in Synagogues, and his new message roused amazement and opposition, which people at Nazareth expressed by their churlish behaviour. By a laying of his hand or a word he exorcised several demons

and cured several violent and incurable diseases. In the small manufacturing district on the caravan road to Damascus, called Gennesaret, it being chosen as his temporary place of stay, hundreds thronged wherever he went, to be blessed by him. Even though he warned the person concerned after each sanative act not to divulge it to anybody, they were so beside themselves with delight that they could no more contain the secret. In no time his fame rang to far-off regions like Syria.

### III

Before the famous Sermon was preached he chose his twelve disciples—all Galileans, except one Judas who betrayed the Master for the paltry sum of less than £ 4—whom he gave the name 'apostles.' The sermon was preached 'down the hill' on a 'level spot' and not on the Mount. Arjuna's sad plight furnished the occasion for the "Celestial Song," which to-day is the Universal Gospel; so too the Sermon of Jesus, though delivered to the disciples, is certainly for all the world. The brevity, universality, authority, grandeur and divine idealism of these words not only impressed on all who heard them deeply but also won immortality for them. Jesus spent all these days in poverty, toil and simplicity, wandering about from village to village like a Sannyasin, proclaiming the divine dignity and glory of man to rejoicing crowds and actively demonstrating it by his own wonderful acts of mercy. To his contemporary Jews righteousness meant only scrupulous attention to the performance of exaggerated and meaningless ritualistic minutiae; whereas Jesus insisted on a change of

mind—*metanoia*. He gave moral and spiritual edification by his inspiring words and august personality. But this opened a new page in his story, namely, the increasing spite and hatred of the Jewish legalists. This new development alarmed his mother and brothers, and more than once they went to dissuade him.

Probably to avoid them and the increasing crowd he retired to the eastern shore of the lake after he had preached to the crowd from the boat itself. The boat being caught up in a storm he hushed the squall with divine majesty; and again on another occasion he taught the power of faith to Peter by walking over the sea to console him and his party. The Pharisees and their scribes had now a new cause of wonder and jealousy at seeing him forgive sins. They complained to the disciples why he ate and drank with tax-gathers and sinners? The characteristic reply was: "Healthy people have no need of a doctor, but those who are ill; I have not come to call just men, but sinners to repentance." Jesus placed mercy above sacrifice.

#### IV

Jesus came at a time when the Mediterranean world was sinking into ever deepening degradation. The masses of the Roman Empire under whom the Jews were a subject race were in a morass of superstition and immorality, and the Jewish religion itself was almost choked by deadening formalism and hypocrisy. The dismal condition spreading over state and religion reawoke in the minds of men the hope in a Messiah—a servant of Jehovah, the Eternal, who will rescue them. But the Jews were expecting

a temporal sovereign who would suppress the enemies and raise the people to the summit of earthly prosperity and luxury. They were therefore unable to understand Jesus and his mission. Beyond the arrogant and obnoxious insistence on the letter of the sacerdotal law nothing could claim their attention. So in their eyes the sanative deeds and divine claims of Jesus were blasphemy. They objected so much as his command to the healed man at the Pool of Bethsaida to take the mat on which he lay and walk, because none should carry even the smallest burden on the Sabbath; his healing on Sabbath day was seriously watched; and when they saw his disciples, while crossing the cornfields, pulling some ears of corn to eat them rubbing them in their hands, they could wait no more. Jesus defended himself irresistably and with divine calmness; the power he had with the people unnerved them to do anything against him. But the hostility became bitter and persistent and he had to leave Jerusalem soon.

Jesus was shadowed by Pharisaic spies seeking occasion to get over him by some craft; and he returned therefore to Galilee with the knowledge of his coming violent death. The news of John's death betokened darker days for Jesus and his followers and he had often to retire to deserts or tops of hills, where he spent his time in solitary prayer. The rage of his opponents must have reached high when they saw him teach the Lord's prayers emphasising the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man in ringing accents. This must certainly have been an innovation upon their tribal conception of the Deity. They therefore began now to

impute his miracles to the arch-devil; but they were rebuffed by Jesus in the sternest manner. Finally with the confused breaking up of a feast in a Pharisee's house, where Jesus un-hidingly exposed the hypocrisy and baseness of the priesthood, amidst the tumult of taunting hosts and eager crowds, he had to put an end to his stay at Galilee.

Flight, peril and concealment were his lot afterwards. From Tyre and Sidon he sailed to Magdala and came near Caesarea Philippi where he carried conviction into the hearts of his disciples regarding his divinity by transfiguring himself in radiant white robes on the Hermon. Again he appeared suddenly at Jerusalem on a festive day where he evinced his sovereign wisdom and tenderness in connection with the episode of the woman who was caught in adultery. He left the temple under a ban of excommunication and was once more back in Galilee to leave it for ever. On the day of the feast of dedication he was again at Jerusalem passing through Bethany where Mary in her devotion and gratitude broke the alabaster flask of pure nard perfume and poured it over him, exciting the greed of Judas. After the signal revival of Lazarus by his power, on Palm Sunday he entered Jerusalem on a colt amidst shouts of 'Hosanna.' The day was spent in preaching and at dusk, as it is the wont of Hindu Parivrajakas even to-day, he retired outside the city.

## V

During all these days Jesus devoted special care to train his disciples in sacrifice, humility and service, turning every small occasion to advantage.

On a previous occasion he had inculcated the need of the most absolute contentment and simplicity. Now, on the evening of that Thursday in the Passion week he was instituting the sacrament of Eucharist, he cured their pride and personal ambition betrayed by their mutual jealousy and eagerness for precedence, by himself washing the feet of his disciples. We are reminded of another great act declaring the same lesson in the behaviour of Sri Krishna at the Rajasuya ceremony of Yudhishthira. The Last supper was accompanied by significant instruction and words of unfailing consolation. Afterwards Jesus walked in darkness to the Hill of Olives and to the place called Gethsemane where he passed through the mysterious passion and agony. "My heart is sad, sad even unto death—" he declared to Peter, James and John whom he took apart. Then he went forward a little and fell to the earth in prayer, after which he returned to see his disciples asleep. Suddenly with lit torches appeared a mob with swords and cudgels who had come from the high priest, scribes and elders. They took him captive, his identity being betrayed by Judas by a kiss. "All his disciples forsook him and fled." He was then called before an irregular midnight tribunal, exposed to beastly violence and crucified. After prayer for his murderers he committed his spirit to his Father's hand and with a loud cry he expired. The event, it is said, was synchronised by an earthquake and obscuration. On the third day Jesus rose; and he continued, it is believed, to appear to his chosen men for forty days, which must have inspired them with great power and unity.

## VI

Through this scrappy outline the historic personality of Jesus stands forth in all its majesty. In the words of Bhagavata XI: 1.6, 7—where the words are used regarding Sri Krishna—we may more or less say of Jesus that he too withdrew from vision leaving behind him the pattern of a soul-entrancing form, a glorious chain of divine deeds and a treasure of wise teachings with the hope that subsequent generations will be redeemed from darkness by these, along with his glory widely sung over the earth. Jesus never counted human favour and taught the way of God honestly so that people might inherit that glory of righteousness which is spiritual and imperishable. In faith, cast-iron faith, and utter dedication to God lay the secret of his teaching. He went by the road that scripture had prescribed. Prayers and fasting were among the discipline prescribed to bring the mind and body under control; what he disliked was sanctimoniousness. Beware of the scribes, he warned. "They like to walk in long robes to get saluted in the market places, to secure the front seat in the synagogues and the best place at the banquet; they prey upon the property of widows and offer long unreal prayers." Jesus obeyed the Mosaic law; but he cared infinitely more for the spirit that underlay it. He did not wear the phylacteries or the prophet's mantle; he dressed and ate like a plain man conscious of his own pregnant saying that what defiles a man is not what enters into him but what comes out of him. He insisted that respect should be accorded to all recognised laws, Jewish or Pagan, and taught that all teachers should be

honoured. He checked all kind of political agitation and dispelled the chiliastic delusion of his people by significant acts of his own. He placed himself at the end of the Old Testament and employed words in the simple, obvious, traditional sense. He was not a theologian or a metaphysician. He cared all for the moral and spiritual being and gave the most beautiful meaning to charity, humility and humanity. "The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve," an idea more divinely put in the Gita, III: 22, 23. He embodied the teaching "whoever wants to be the first must be the slave of all." In fact, to attain the spiritual state he had in mind "everyone has to be consecrated by the fire of the discipline."

Renunciation was the core of his message. To a wistful youth perfectly moral, chaste and loyal to parents, with a loving glance, he advised. "Go and sell all you have, give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, take up the cross and follow me." In unequivocal terms he expressed how difficult it is for those who rely on money to realise God. With almost Upanishadic purity and grandeur he replied to the scribe who wanted to know the chief of all commands: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and you must love the Lord, your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole mind and with your whole strength. The second is this: you must love your neighbour as yourself."—"That is far more than all holocausts and sacrifices," seconded the hearer. Jesus taught the common man, and the best among them, his

disciples, hardly understood him; therefore the highest truth that the Divine is both immanent and transcendent unity, and that man is potentially Divine was only dimly indicated in his sayings.

### VII

Today, after nineteen long centuries, have the nations who have done the most to spread his name understood this messenger of Love? If so, should there be this repeated recrudescence of blood-shed? Perhaps it may not be a far away date when the thoughtful

among them may come out of the thick mental insulation and view him through the pure and radiant spiritual atmosphere of Vedantic thought and get a correct knowledge of him who was an oriental of orientals, in thought and outlook and Divinity Itself, as the mystic Jacapone da Todi sang, expressing a typically Indian sentiment.

Come come with me!  
Folk, why so tardily?  
Eternal life to see  
In swaddling clothes.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DISCIPLE

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life.—The Editors.]

IT was morning. The Mother was seated near the bedstead in the room adjacent to the Chapel. We were engaged in conversation.

Disciple: Some say that it is not good for the Sadhus to work in the Sevashramas and dispensaries or to be preoccupied with other temporal works. Did the Master ever undertake such activities? Works of this kind are thrust upon the seekers who enter the Order with a yearning for the realisation of God. If one must do some work, let it be the performance of worship in the chapel, meditation, Japam and devotional music. Activities other than these entangle one in desires and turn one away from God.

Mother: You must not listen to those who talk like that. What will you do day and night if you are not engaged in work? Can you practise meditation and Japam for twenty-four hours? You have referred to the Master. But his case was different. Mathur used to supply him with proper diet. You are able to get your food because you are doing some work. Otherwise you would have to roam from door to door begging for a morsel of food. Perhaps you would fall ill. Besides, where are people today to give alms to the Sadhus? Never pay any heed to such words. Things will go on as the Master directs. The Math will be run on these lines. Those who

cannot adjust themselves will go away.....

Disciple: Enjoyments come from desire alone. A man may live in a four-storeyed mansion; but he does not really enjoy anything if he has no desire. And a man may live under a tree, but if he has desire he gets all enjoyment from that alone. The Master used to say, "A person may have no relatives anywhere; but Mahamaya may cause him to keep a cat and thus make him worldly. Such is her play!"

Mother: That's true. Everything is due to desire. What bondage is there for a man who has no desire? You see, I live with all these things, but I do not feel any attachment; no, not the least.

Disciple: What desire can you possibly have? But how many insignificant desires crop up in our minds! How can we get rid of them?

Mother: In your case, these are no real desires. They are nothing. They are mere cogitations that appear and disappear in your mind. The more they come and go the better for you.<sup>1</sup>

Disciple: I thought yesterday, how could I fight with my mind unless God assured me His protection?

<sup>1</sup> A Sannyasin devotee once asked the Holy Mother, "I have been practising religious disciplines. I do not relax my efforts in that direction. But it appears that the impurities of mind are not growing less." The Mother said, "You have rolled different threads on a reel—red, black and white. While unrolling you will see them all exactly in the same way." There are two kinds of desires: One that stimulates enjoyment and the other exhausting themselves without residual effect on the mind. Though externally they look same, their effects are different.

No sooner does one desire disappear than another crops up.

Mother: So long as the 'ego' exists, the desires also undoubtedly remain. But those desires will not injure you. The Master will be your protector. It will be unkind on the part of the Master if he does not protect those who have taken shelter at his feet, who have taken refuge in him renouncing all, and who want to lead a good life. You must live depending upon him. Let him do good to you, if he so desires, or let him drown you if that is his will. But you are to do only what is righteous, and that also according to the power he has given you.

Disciple: Have I, O Mother, surrendered to him to that extent? Sometimes I feel that I can depend upon him to a small extent and the next moment it disappears. What will be the way for us if he does not protect us? Sometimes I think that now you, O Mother, are alive; and we can report our dangers and difficulties to you and feel peace in looking at your face. Who will protect us after this? We shall feel safe if you give us assurance.....

Disciple: Mother, was it not arranged that you were to visit Puri Jagannath at the time of the "Car Festival?"

Mother: Should one go there when there is such a rush of people? Perhaps there will be an epidemic of cholera then. Lakshminikanta (the priest) said, "Even now all the rooms and houses are rented. There is no place to live. Even the small rooms have been rented for ten rupees each. Please come during the winter months."

Disciple: What deity does the image of Jagannath represent?

Mother: I dreamt of Jagannath as the image of Shiva.

Disciple: Did you not see in the temple this image of Jagannath when you visited the place?

Mother: No, only the image of Shiva. Shiva, the Lord of the universe, was installed on the altar made of one lakh of *Salagrams*. There must be something Divine there; otherwise why should there be such a rush of people? The Goddess Vimala is worshipped in the Temple compound. A goat is offered to Her on the night of the Mahashtami. Vimala is after all Durga, is that not so? Therefore, is it not natural for Shiva to dwell there?

Disciple: Some say that originally it was a Buddhist temple and the image of Buddha was installed there. Later on, Shankaracharya removed the Buddhists and transformed that very image of Buddha into the emblem of Shiva. Last of all, when Vaishnavism was preached, people turned Shiva into Jagannath, Vishnu.

Mother: What do I know? I only saw the emblem of Shiva.

Disciple: How many temples, gods and goddesses the Mussalmans have destroyed! They have cut off the noses of some of them, and the ears of others.

Mother: Govindaji of Brindavana fled to Jayapur for fear of the Mussalmans. The priests of Brindavana lay without food or drink in the temple to move the pity of the Deity. At last a revelation said, "The image verily has gone away; but I am still here. Make another image and I will dwell in it."

Disciple: There is the temple of Somanath in Gujarat. The priests in former times used to bathe the Deity daily with water from the

Gangotri. Every day people used to carry water from the Himalayas in pots on their heads. Sultan Mahamud demolished the image and carried away the temple doors that were made of sandalwood. Why should that happen?

Mother: The Deity goes away for fear of wicked people. But why should that be so? He can do whatever He likes by His mere will. This also is Leela of God.....

Disciple: Can the effect of Karma be made null and void? The scriptures say that Knowledge alone can destroy Karma. Still one must reap the result of Prarabdha-karma.

Mother: Karma alone is responsible for our misery and happiness. Even the Master had to suffer from the effect of Karma. Once his elder brother was drinking water while delirious. The Master snatched the glass out of his hand after he had drunk just a little. The brother became angry and said, "You have stopped me from drinking water. You will also suffer like this. You will also feel such pain in your throat." The Master said, "Brother, I did not mean to injure you. You are ill. Water will harm you. That is why I have taken the glass away. Why have you, then, cursed me like this?" The brother said, weeping, "I do not know brother. Those words have come from my mouth. These cannot but bear fruit." At the time of his illness, the Master said to me, "I have got this ulcer in my throat because of that curse. Well, none of you will have to suffer. I am bearing everybody's suffering."

I said to him in reply, "How can man possibly live, if a thing like this can happen to you?" The Master remarked, "My brother was a

righteous man. His words must come true. Can the words of anyone and everyone be thus fulfilled?"

The result of Karma is inevitable. But by repeating the name of God, you can lessen its intensity. If you were destined to have a wound as wide as a ploughshare you will get a pin-prick at least. The effect of Karma can be counteracted to a great extent by Japam and austerities. This was the case with King Suratha. He had worshipped the Goddess by slaughtering a lakh of goats. Later on, these one-hundred-thousand goats killed the king with one stroke of the sword; he did not have to be born one hundred-thousand times. That was because he had worshipped the Divine Mother. Chanting God's holy name lessens the intensity of *Karmic* effects.

Disciple: If that be so, then the law of Karma is supreme in this world. Then why should one believe God? The Buddhists accept law of Karma but not God.

Mother: Do you mean to say that there are no deities like Kali, Krishna and Durga?

Disciple: Is the effect of Karma destroyed by austerities and Japam?

Mother: Why not? It is good to do the right kind of work. One feels good in doing good, and one suffers for evil action....

Disciple: Mother, now and then I see you reading from Ramayana. When did you learn to read?

Mother: During my childhood, Prasanna, Ramanath and others used to go to the village school. I used to accompany them now and then. Thus I learned to read a little. Later on, Lakshmi and I used to read the Bengali primer a little at Kamarpukur. My nephew, Hridaya, snatched

ed the book away from me. He said, "Women should not learn to read and write. Are you preparing yourself thus to read novels and dramas later on?" But Lakshmi did not give up the book. She belonged to the family. Therefore she held on to her book. But I also secretly bought a copy for one anna. Lakshmi used to attend the village school. On returning home she would teach me. I really learned to read later on at Dakshineswar. The Master was staying then at Shyampukur for treatment. I was all alone. A girl belonging to the family of Bhava Mukherjee used to come to the garden to bathe in the Ganges. Now and then she would spend a long while with me. She used to give me lessons and examine me. I used to give her a large quantity of green vegetables and other articles of food-stuff that were sent to me from the garden.

Disciple: Mother, did the Master visit Jayarambati frequently or did he go there only once or twice?

Mother: He was there many a time. Sometimes he spent ten or twelve days continuously there. Whenever he went to Kamarpukur, he used to visit Jayarambati, Sheore and other places. At Sheore he once fed the cowherd boys.

Disciple: When did this happen? During the period of austerities or later on?

Mother: Later on. He was not himself while practising spiritual disciplines. Had he visited his father-in-law's place then, people would have called him a mad man. When Shiva visited His father-in-law's place, all began to say, "Oh, poor Uma! such is your ill luck! You had to be married to an inebriate!" After marriage people used to say many

things about the Master: "A mad son-in-law! What will be the fate of the poor girl?".....

Disciple: Many devotees used to visit the Master. Where are they now? None of them comes to see you.

Mother: Oh, they are all leading happy lives.

Disciple: What, happy!

Mother: You are right. How can a man be happy in this world with his wife and children? They have forgotten themselves in "woman and gold." Everything in the world results in suffering after all.

Disciple: Besides, the mind has outgoing propensities.

Mother: Kali, the Mother of the universe, is the Mother of all. It is She alone who has begotten both good and evil. Everything has come out of Her womb. There are different kinds of perfect souls: those perfect from very birth, those perfect through spiritual disciplines, those perfect through the grace of a teacher and those made perfect all of a sudden.

Disciple: What is the meaning of "made perfect all of a sudden?"

Mother: It is like becoming wealthy suddenly by inheriting the riches of another.

Just then Nalini, Mother's niece, entered the room, after a bath in the Ganges. Finding the closet a little dirty, she washed it with a few pots of water, and hence had to take bath in the Ganges for purification. The disciple and the Mother opined that she need have bathed in the tap alone.

Mother: Indeed, you could as well bathe in the tap water in the house and then touch Ganges water.

Nalini: How is that possible? A water closet!

Mother: What difference does that make? You have not actually

touched filth. What does it matter even if you have? There is filth in our intestines..... I have also walked over dry filth many a time in the country. I chanted the name of Govinda a few times and felt pure. The mind is everything. It is in the mind alone that one feels pure and impure. A man, first of all, makes his own mind guilty, and then alone he can see another man's guilt? It only injures you. This has been my nature from childhood that I cannot see anybody's fault. If a man does a trifle for me, I try to remember him even for that. To see the fault of others! One should never do it. I never do so. Forgiveness is Tapasya (austerity).

Disciple: Swamiji (referring to Swami Vivekananda) used to say, "Suppose a thief entered the house and stole something. The idea of the thief would flash in your mind. But a baby has no such idea. Therefore it would not see anyone as a thief."

Mother: That's true indeed. He who has a pure mind sees everything pure. The mind of this Golap (referring to Golap-ma who had just entered the room) is pure. A certain child committed a nuisance in the temple of Madhava at Brindavan. All talked about it, but no one cared to clean the place. Golap tore off a piece of her new valuable cloth and with it wiped away the filth. The other women whispered to one another, "As she has cleaned the place, it must be her child." I thought within myself, "See, O Madhava, what people are talking!" Some one remarked, "No, she is a holy person. (There were monks like Swami Yogananda in the party). How can you talk of her children? She has removed the filth out of kind-

ness, as it made the temple unclean and caused inconvenience to everybody.

If Golap sees any filth in the Ghat of the Ganges, she procures a rag from somewhere and cleans the place. Then she washes the steps with pots of water. Others are benefited by it. Their happiness makes Golap happy; their peace of mind makes her peaceful.

One is born with a pure mind if he has performed many austerities and spiritual practices in previous birth.

Disciple: Mother, my mind does not relish Japam or spiritual practices.

Mother (smiling): Why? Not at all?

Disciple: Oh, I do a little rather half-heartedly. The next moment I think, what is the use of mumbling? If God exists, then He is: let me rather try meditation.

Mother: Can you meditate?

Disciple: No, I cannot do even that. I understand all; but where do I get peace? You know the road to Dakshineswar very well; but can you walk all the way?

Mother: Japam or the mumbling of a word is the duty of a woman. You have knowledge!

Lalit Babu entered the room and saluted the Mother and they became engaged in conversation, the disciple joining in now and then.

Mother: The Master used to say, "The way is extremely difficult, like the sharp edge of a razor." (After a little pause); but he has kept you in his arms. He is looking after you.

Disciple: But he does not let us know that he is doing so.

Mother: Yes, that's your trouble.

Disciple: Yes, Mother.

Lalit: The Master will take us into his arms after death; is there anything great in that? If he would only do so while we are in this body!

Mother: He is holding you in his arms often in this body. He is above your head. Truly he is holding you.

Disciple: Does he really hold us?

Mother: Yes, it is true.

Disciple: Are you telling the truth?

Mother: Yes, I say it truly that he is holding you tightly.

Disciple: True!

Mother (firmly): Yes, really and truly.

Mother finished the morning worship and distributed Prasadam in *sal* leaves to the devotees. Then she swept the room. As she took the dirt in her hand, a pin entered her little finger. The finger bled and Mother suffered terribly from pain. As soon as the disciple heard about it, he ran upstairs. Someone asked him to apply hot lime. That greatly relieved the pain. The Mother said to him affectionately, "My child, you are my own. Truly you are my very own."

## THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

BY DR. M. HAFIZ SYED, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT., L.T.

[Dr. Syed belongs to the Allahabad University. His scholarship is matched by deep culture and broad sympathies. In the following paragraphs he points out how reflection on the real and the unreal is inevitable to the thoughtful, leading as it would to deep ethical and spiritual consequences.—The Editors.]

PLATO said, "Philosophy begins in wonder," and it is wonder that leads to reflection; but how few there are who seriously pause to reflect on what they see around them. The ancient Indian thinkers also laid due emphasis on proper cultivation of this necessary habit of thought. They say that without reflection one cannot possibly learn to discriminate between the real and the unreal. It is reflection that inevitably leads a man on to what is called Vairagya (dispassion or desirelessness) without which no spiritual life is possible.

The majority of people are so much absorbed in living that they do not care to know what life is; and that is why glaring events of life which to a thoughtful man serve as food for serious reflection, do not rouse any thought of wonder or any feeling of bewilderment in them. They take every thing as a matter of course and continue to be engrossed in their petty affairs of life.

One over-conspicuous or obtrusively stern reality of our lives is death that stares us in the face and makes short work of ever so many of us every day, and yet we do not consider our own fate and cheerily go on with our usual business. This attitude of mind shows no little indifference and lack of thought. Men commit so many sins and suffer so much because they look upon this earthly life as the only

reality which as a matter of fact is not truly real but a shadow of an eternal substance. We would certainly cease to do wrong and injury to others for our selfish ends if we learned to keep this changing character of our outer life in view.

We should occasionally remind ourselves how millions of men are daily born in the physical form and die, and how countless numbers of beings must have come and gone in the past from this ever-changing world. We find at the close of our physical existence that the so called prizes of the earth have no intrinsic value or weight in them. The wise, the thoughtful, do not run after shadow.

This kind of serious reflection on the outer happiness of our life will go a long way in detaching us from temporary earthly attractions and creating in our minds a feeling of serenity and balance—a thing so necessary for higher life.

The fact that the outer world with all its attractions and solid-seeming multifarious forms, is after all changing every moment and is, therefore, unreal, could hardly be denied or repudiated. It is so patent that it needs no proof. Any one who is accustomed to thoughtful observation and close reflection needs no argument to carry conviction to him in regard to the transitory nature of this world. There is nothing wrong in

calling a spade a spade. To state a true fact however unpalatable, is not to take a gloomy view of life. To think of the unreality of the world is not futile. It has a moral as well as an utilitarian value.

It is not often that one is confronted with dire misfortune and calamity of various kinds: ill health, loss, penury, failure and discomfort; naturally one is disheartened, forlorn and dejected and finds it hard to bear one's miserable existence placidly. But one who habitually dwells on the passing nature of this mundane world does really put on a brave face and meets his ill luck with equanimity. Whenever he is in sore need and has nothing to fall back upon, instead of breaking his heart, he takes a wise view of his hard lot and begins to remind himself that neither joy nor sorrow lasts for ever. After all, his dark days are as short-lived and momentary as his prosperous ones.

The idea of the unreality of the world, if constantly borne in mind, helps a person to become desireless and care-free. There is no virtue higher than desirelessness. Desire is the root of sin which gives rise in its turn to sorrow and suffering. He who has cultivated dispassion is capable of applying himself to any higher pursuit, because a care-free mind alone can accomplish great things in the intellectual, moral and spiritual realm.

He who has convinced himself that everything earthly is subject to change, decay and death does not allow himself to be attached to any earthly pleasure. He knows that it is momentary and is therefore not worthy of his attention. Thus we see that taking this moving world at

its right value by no means plunges us into what is called a "dark and dreary view of life," but fills us with hopes and cheer and makes us happy and contented.

The unreal hath no being; the real never ceaseth to be; the truth about both hath been perceived by the seers of the essence of things (Tattva).—(*Bhagavad-Gita*, II, 16.)

While analysing the content of the outer world and finding it changing and therefore unreal, the ancient Indian philosophers have unmistakably pointed out to the underlying Reality which is eternally free from change and decay.

We are advised to cultivate discrimination (Viveka), to set our heart on the Real and not feel distressed when the outer form begins to crumble down and die.

This truth is variously explained in some of the *Upanishads* and is summarised in the following lines.

The *Kathopanishad* asks in a thoughtful vein: "What decaying mortal here below would delight in a life of the contemplation of the pleasures of beauty and love, when once he has come to taste of the kind of life enjoyed by the unageing immortals?" (I: 1, 28). In a similar spirit, the *Kathopanishad* condemns "the desire for a long life of sensual enjoyment in preference to even a momentary contemplation of the life immortal." This reflective mood is most expressively brought forth in the *Maitrayani-Upanishad*, where, our attention having been called to the contemplation of the universal evil that exists in the world and the impermanence of things having been most poetically expressed, physical life is described as the source of pain

and misery. "What is the use of the satisfaction of desires," asks Brihadratha, "in this foul-smelling and unsubstantial body? What is the use of the satisfaction of the desires in this body which is afflicted by lust, anger, covetousness, fear, dejection, envy, separation from the desired, union with the undesirable, hunger, thirst, old age, death, disease, and grief? Verily all this outer world merely decays. What of these? The great oceans dry up, the mountains crumble, the pole-star deviates from its place, the wind-cords are broken, the earth is submerged, and the very gods are dislocated from their positions." Contemplating such a situation, Brihadriatha entreats Sakayanya to save him, as one might save a frog from a waterless well. Again in the *Chandokyo Upanishad* we read: "Prajapati said, verily, O Indra, this body is subject to death, but it is at the same time the vesture of an immortal soul. It is only when the Soul is encased in the body, that it is cognisant of pleasure and pain. There is neither pleasure nor pain for the Soul once relieved of its body. Just as the wind and the cloud, the lightning and the thunder, are without body, and arise from heavenly space and appear in their own form, so does this serene being, namely, the Self, arise from this mortal body, reach the highest light, and then appear in his own form. This Serene Being, who appears in his own form is the highest Person." There is here an indication of the true nature of ultimate reality as being of the nature of Self-consciousness. That which sees itself by itself in the light of supreme knowledge—that must be regarded as the final reality. "The final reality, there-

fore, according to the *Chandogya Upanishad*, is reached in that ecstatic, Self-seeing state in which the Self is conscious of nothing but itself."

"Greater reality than the reality of the world of illusion belongs to the world of dream; greater reality than the reality of the world of dream belongs to the world of life; greater reality than the world of life belongs to the world of the Self, or God, or the Absolute, which are all ultimately identical with one another. Every system of philosophy must needs take account of some sort of appearance."

It will be interesting for us to remember that Kant, too, while strongly inveighing against the Dogmatism and Scepticism of his times, by a thoroughgoing critical analysis of Reason came to the independent conclusion that the world, qualified as it is by Time, Space, and Causality, has no metaphysical reality, but none the less is an appearance *i.e.*, is empirically real.<sup>1</sup>

That the only true existence is that of Brahman, the absolute, that Brahman is identical with the Atman and that the universe is Maya, illusion, having only a phenomenal or relative existence, are accepted in the main by most of the ancient Indian philosophers. But some later thinkers have taken a different view. Vallabha, for instance, goes as far as to say that the whole world is real and is subtly Brahman.<sup>2</sup>

The world is therefore as eternal and real as Brahman Himself and its creation and destruction are due to the power (Sakti) of Brahman.

<sup>1</sup> Doctrine of Maya p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Indian Philosophy* by S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. II. p. 756.

The world cannot be regarded as an illusory appearance, nor is it essentially different from Brahman. The relation of Cause and Effect is one of absolute identity. The universe in truth is Brahman. Brahman manifests himself of his own will, as the individual souls and the world, without undergoing any change in his essential nature. He is the material as well as the efficient cause of the world. The charges of partiality and cruelty cannot be urged against Brahman, since the difference of the Jivas from Brahman is admitted by Vallabha. He holds that the Jiva, freed from the fetters of Maya, is one with Brahman.<sup>3</sup>

The world of Maya is not regarded as unreal, since Maya is nothing else than a power which Isvara of his free

will produces. The world is true though our experience is wrong. We do not realise that the world is but a form of Brahman.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that everything external is a mere appearance, and the reality lies only in spirit, is corroborated by Prof. F. H. Bradley, the author of *Appearance and Reality*, in these words: "Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be, any reality, and the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real." The essential message of Hegel was also to the same effect.

"The true life," says Fichte, "lives in the eternal. It is a whole in every instant, the highest life which is possible at all. The phantom life lives in the changing. The phantom life therefore becomes an incessant dying; it lives in dying."

<sup>3</sup> *History of Indian Philosophy* by S. Radhakrishnan, p. 758.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 759.

## A PILGRIMAGE TO ASSISI

BY SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA

[The following is an abridgement of a news letter from Paris by Swami Siddheswarananda. The Swami is the leader of the Vedanta centre in Paris. The letter was written before the outbreak of the war.—The Editors.]

THIS time my news letter relates to my recent visit to Florence, where I had a long-standing invitation from some kind friends. It was a journey of about twenty hours from Paris, and I had a very pleasant experience of it as my kind hosts, the R— family, had provided me with pullman comforts in the train. My chief idea in undertaking this journey was to go on a pilgrimage to Assisi and Siena and to see the great works of art of the period of Italian Renaissance.....

The first two days of my stay were taken up with seeing the objects of cultural interest in Florence. The place is associated with the long-drawn struggle between the Guelphs and the Ghibillines, and was the scene of many a tragic outbreak of Florentine passion,—of the historic execution of Savonarola who was confined to its towers....Of the numerous buildings and castles of great historical interest and of the many sculptures and paintings of world-wide renown, like those of Michael Angelo,

Raphael, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci and Fra Angelico, I shall not give any account here, but go straight to my visit to Assisi.

Leaving Florence one noon, after a three-and-a-half hours' travel by train, we arrived at Assisi, the place associated with St. Francis. The Umbrian hill town is some four miles from the station. We took a taxi and came and pitched our camp in a fine hotel—Hotel Subasic, and taking our evening tea, we all immediately began our pilgrimage.

It has been a long hope of mine to see places consecrated by the life and deeds of St. Francis and St. Clare, the two illustrious names associated with Catholic mysticism that have become by-words to express the best and deepest in the religion of Christ—reproductions of the life of the Saviour for a posterity that required a re-manifestation of his life. One cannot agree with the words of Nietzsche that there was only one Christian and he died on the cross. There have been many real Christians that lived the life of Him who died on the cross, and there are still some who aspire to express what Lord Jesus conceived as the best and the noblest end of man. Christianity is alive not because of her cathedrals and her church dignitaries. It lives and shapes civilisation because it is, and has been, a living force in history, considered as the descent of the Divine on this poor earth torn by the incapacity of man to realise his full candidature to Divinity and to arrive at a real conception of humanity as a pathway leading to this goal. Christ came to show the light to reach the truly human which is the real Divine. His standard is kept up by the aspirations of His devotees

drawn from all ages and all climes. They are the salt of the earth and if we should look at Western civilisation, we must see the under-current of their lives—that subsoil from which has sprouted all that is best and great in the West. For the present we are in an impasse. Earth is sick and heaven is weary when statesmen and generals talk of peace and goodwill among nations. As Wordsworth has sung, "Oh Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour, England hath need of thee." Not only England but the whole of Europe is a fen of stagnant waters that breed the worst form of life that threatens the very basis of civilisation. But one should not judge the movement of life from one isolated segment in Time—the present. And the hope of the future, as Sri Ramakrishna has pointed out, is only in Man becoming endowed with spiritual awareness.

The life and teachings of St. Francis is a re-vindication of this hope; in him we see a mysticism that is not barely 'introverti' but having an application in this wide suffering world of ours. He identified himself with the human and the sub-human world and reached heights of consciousness that make us see in him some approach to the life of Sri Ramakrishna. I hope some of you have read the beautiful book written by Sister Devamata on Sri Ramakrishna and St. Francis.

Assisi, one can definitely say, is the Melkote (the famous Vaishnavite temple of Mysore) of Europe. If one can just eliminate the geographical differences and the dress and the nature of the buildings; if one can touch the undercurrent that is so visible for one who can become a bit sensitive; one gets the same waft of holiness, the

same soft touch, the same blessings from one whose heart beats for the poor, and who rained spirituality on all who approached or came within the orbit of his influence. Sri Ramanuja and St. Francis lived almost at the same time. They are the same spirit in twin bodies only. I could forget all the Western costumes I was in and feel myself roaming on the slopes of Tirunarayananapuram. The Christian devotees that came with me—one an Italian and the other two Americans—brought forth to my mind the episodes of the great lives of St. Francis and St. Clare in the same manner.

Every corner in Assisi preserves the atmosphere in which St. Francis and St. Clare left it. The evening gleam of the setting sun was sleeping like an iridescent spread of pollen—to use an imagery from Thomas Hardy—on the slopes of the Umbrian Hills when we descended first to visit the sanctuary of San Damiano, so full of the memories of St. Clare and St. Francis. The little church belonged to the Benedictines. The church which was in a dilapidated condition was restored by St. Francis in 1207 after he had heard the holy voice before the crucifix bidding him, “Francis, seest thou not that my house is being destroyed? Go therefore and repair it for me.” How reminiscent of many incidents of the life of Sri Ramanuja, who heard the voice of God and worked only on that impulse! St. Francis consecrated that monastery to St. Clare and her companions. This was the beginning of the second order of St. Francis known as the Poor Clares. Here she lived for forty-two years till her death in 1253. The convent is the same and a monk took us round and showed all places of interest. We saw the place where St. Francis composed his

famous Canticle to the sun. We saw many relics of St. Clare, her dress, cords attached to her dress, etc. Here, on the place where the crucifix spoke to St. Francis, lies a beautiful motto of St. Francis: *Not the voice but the vow, not clamour but love, not stringed instruments but heart-sounds in the ear of God. The tongue concords with the mind and the mind with God.* In the Refectory stands the same cupboard and door, the very place she occupied at table, marked by a small cross on its surface. Here she blessed the loaves of bread for the community that lived on very frugal rations. In another place they showed us the place where the Saracen army came to attack the convent. Near the ancient door of the convent St. Clare showed to the army of heathens the blessed Sacrament, and such was the power of the Sacrament that the Saracen army got frightened and was put to flight. The same stories we find in many of the pilgrim centres in India. We know many stories of the army of Tippu Sultan checked in its course by the power of this Devi temple or that. The Indian mind could immediately form parallels, and say with the monk who showed us round “Oui, mon pere, c'est n'est pas impossible (Yes, Father, yes, that is not impossible).”

In the chapel of the crucifix there is an excellent piece of wood statue of Christ on the cross, by Bro. Innocent of Palmero (1634). The monk asked us to see it from the middle, and then from the right, and then from the left. Remarkable are the three different aspects of the crucifix, calmness, agony and death. It is so interesting to study this work of art executed purposely to show on the same figure from two different views,

two contradictory expressions of calmness and agony. That figure intrigued me so much and lives still in my mind.

Next we wended our way to another suburb of Assisi, the place whereto St. Francis often returned when he wanted to acquire new force to fulfil his mission. The place is called St. Mary of the Angels. This solitary place pleased St. Francis from the early days of his conversion. Here he formed the order of the Minors to put in action the great idea of evangelising the whole world. Here embraced St. Francis and St. Dominic, a fine representation of which is so beautifully portrayed by the great monk artist Fra Angelico (a copy of which I keep in my room in Paris). Here St. Clare was shorn off her locks by St. Francis as a sign of her renunciation of the world, and here it was, feeling his end coming, St. Francis wished to be laid on the bare ground of the little cell,—there to die surrounded by his brethren, "whilst a flock of nightingales sang his requiem in the near fields." There has now come over this little village chapel, so reminiscent of the times of St. Francis, a huge construction enclosing it. It was begun in 1569 and finished in 1840. These modern forms of architecture looks so banal and useless. It takes away the atmosphere and my friends asked me to look into that Franciscan chapel, as if through a blinker, and never to let attention revert on any of the superimposed forms—the Basilica and its ultra-modern facades. We stayed in the Franciscan chapel for more than two hours. We attended the evening 'office.' There were so many monks assembled along with the laity. I spent also a good time meditating on

the spot where St. Francis passed away.

As we got out of this peaceful place, from the memory of one that rained peace on earth, we dropped into the front yard of the church to see how modern nationalism is fostered. There a village captain of a Fascist team was training a young batch of child Fascists into the arts of warfare. The children were hardly seven or eight, but with little guns in hands and with drums and athletics, they were having a parade. A child from three is trained into the Fascist mode of thought and living. A child of three gets particular kind of badge, at another stage of life he gets another badge and so on until he becomes a full-fledged 'Camice-nere' or Black Shirt.

With the break of the morning we were on our way to Basilica and the convent of St. Francis. The construction of this was begun during the days, perhaps, of St. Francis, but it took a long time to be completed. Everyone knows that the remains of the Saint were confined in this church, but none could exactly spot it out. It was in 1820 the subterranean crypt was excavated round the rock that contains the remains of St. Francis. We spent a long time before the tomb. Mass was being said at the time we were there. Then we saw round the whole church where on the walls are seen fine frescoes. One of the English-speaking monks came to our assistance in seeing round the church. He showed the relics of the Saint: The stone pillow he used, his slippers and his clock. The West has so much historic sense in this line; one sees so many things that the saint actually used in life. That cloak which he used, torn in a number

of places, brought forth tears in our eyes; there is such a simplicity working through it that one feels almost the saint in it. Then we saw the number of pieces of cotton that were used to sponge blood that used to come out of the stigmata every now and then—the hand-writing of the saint and so many other things associated with his life. The monk took us round the courtyard of the convent. There it is all peace. In the middle of the courtyard there is a beautiful statue of the saint surrounded by tall poplars. There we heard one nightingale singing. The monk told us that that bird had lived in a cage in one of the cells of the monks who released it to the freer air of the courtyard. She sang so much at night that the whole brotherhood was disturbed by its chants. Now it lives on the poplars and sings night and day alike! On the verandah of the courtyard I had a long talk with the monk. I gave him an account of Sri Ramakrishna and he spoke to me of St. Francis. And when we parted we had become friends. I told him that every year, if circumstances would permit, I shall come to Assisi and next time I shall live as a guest in their monastery. Assisi is the only place so far I have met in Europe that gives one a complete Indian atmosphere. Here as in Melkote and Benares we meet with people to whom God alone is real and everything else unreal.

Taking a hurried meal, we were again on our way to see the spot where St. Francis lived most. It is the 'Carceri,' high up in the mountains. We took horse carriages. 'Carceri' in modern Italian means a prison; but in the time of St. Francis it indicated a remote place away from the habitations of men. Here in the hermit-

tage St. Francis at times retired to pray and meditate. The woods here were also the cells where the first companions of the saint lived. One or two monks stay up here and the atmosphere is so fine that I didn't want to leave it. Coming down we took a taxi and wanted to see some portion of the city of Perugia. This Etrusean city and Assisi have made history by their constant wars. It is some ten miles from Assisi. It is a very modern city, with a university which has a reputation to grant cheap degrees to all who go there. Everywhere we saw only Fascist demonstrations. We took train from Perugia after dinner and came to Florence by midnight.

After taking a day's rest, we were again on our way to Siena, the place of Sainte Catherine. The place did not at all produce any deep impression in my mind; perhaps the priest who showed us round is responsible for it; he spoke with such a tone in his voice that made us believe that he had not even that reverence which the devotees have for that place. We came then to a church to see some fine paintings of the great painter Sodoma. On our way to the Museum that had some other paintings, my interest was drawn to another grand Fascist demonstration. There must have been there at least a thousand young men and women. They were having their drill.

Next day, taking advantage of the nice morning, we went to see the monastery of San Marco, which is a perfect museum of the works of Fra Angelico who passed years of his life within walls. It was erected between 1437 and 1443. During the time of Cosimo, when the architect Michelozzo worked in improving it, Fra

Angelico decorated the walls with these incomparable fresco paintings. From 1490 to 1498 San Marco was also the home of the Dominican preacher, Savonarola. In every cell occupied by the then monks, one finds some biblical event portrayed by Fra Angelico. The same spirit that dominated the Buddhist monks that made Ajanta a work of art pervaded the whole monastery of San Marco. The religious spirit everywhere is the same and very often manifests the same impulse to capture it in stone and verse all over the world. Where would have been art if it had not been for the inspiration of religion? And those who decry the religious spirit do not know that the world would have been very much poorer if humanity had not been endowed with that noble impulse that binds the soul of man with the spirit of God, as the very word religion indicates. There is a tendency to decry the monastic spirit in some sections of our educated community in India and elsewhere. But how many know that the leading movements in the world that have made life human have been initiated by monks, who became the votaries of Truth that took them not only to the pedestal of the Divine but made the earth their footstool. "Atmano mokshaya Jagadhitaya" was not said in vain.....

Before concluding this letter I shall also refer to an interesting interview I had with one Signore F—— who came to meet me at ten o'clock at night and remained till two in the morning, the whole R—— family being present during the conversation. It was partly humorous and partly serious. Signore F—— is an ardent Catholic and he came to silence me.

He sat in a nonchalant way on a sofa and asked me: "Sir, have you sacrament and communion in your religion?"

I knew that he held the belief that without that aspect of Catholic Christianity, no one can get salvation. I wanted to answer him from his level and so said: "Surely, how can one get salvation without Holy Sacrament? We have our Ganges and sacred *prasads* like Puri *mahaprasad* which we consider as our sacrament." "What is your conception of Sacrament?" he asked me adding, "Do you believe the presence of God in the bread and wine like us Catholics?"

"Much more," I said. "You have to invoke the presence of Christ in bread and wine, but to us the Ganges water is the veritable Brahman, God; so also Puri *mahaprasadam* and the dust of Brindavan (explaining what all these meant). I accept your position that God comes to you through sacrament; but I shall sit up the whole night if you can prove that God is not in my Ganges—the burden of proving the opposite is with you."

"Impossible," he replied, and then with a look of surprise he asked me, "how can river water, a grain of rice, and some dust be God?"

"What is your conception of God, monsieur?" I asked. He could only mumble. I had to tell that he had a Judaic conception, the whole basis of his religious thinking being Judaic. We have our conception of God, the Chinese have their conception of God, the Eskimos have their conception of God and so on and so forth.

"But," he said, "they are not true." "Who told you?" I asked. "It is so," he said. "We know it to be so." I had to be a bit sneering

and asked him, "Were you present when God made the decision that only the Judaic conception is true." I then spoke to him about the idea of truth from the point of view of comparative religion. The Catholic idea that they alone possess the Truth is childish faith which it is inutile for serious minds to engage with; but it is necessary in the interests of world peace to have a broader idea of Truth. I explained among others Swami Vivekananda's imagery of photographing the sun, and the different approaches one makes in the endeavour to comprehend this innate urge to know Truth from the standpoint to which one is most fitted.

After a long sigh my friend remarked, "It is difficult to contradict you; but I must say the Western training we have got prohibits us from accepting your position. We cannot give up the idea we alone possess Truth; our civilisation is built on that; if your viewpoint becomes accepted, the whole basis of our civilisation will have to change." I totally agreed with him and said, "Yes, in your way of understanding Truth, 'yes' and 'no' are two different, absolutely opposing units. But according to us, in this relative world there cannot be absolute contradiction. Contradiction is also a relative point of view. You have applied in your attitude in social, economic and political fields the reflex of your religious moods; that is why you have so much violence in Europe and you have not been able to absorb the benefits of science. The only country in Europe that could boast of bringing civilisation to another country without violence is Denmark."

It was late when we went to bed. The next day I had a long talk with another pious Catholic lady who was from the beginning afraid of approaching me, but hearing me narrate the veneration Sri Ramakrishna had for Jesus, and his realisation of him, she became friendly and spent a long time with me. She presented me with nice books, and came to see me off at the station. The train left at noon, and just before the engine steamed out, one of the young R—s ran with a toy cage towards my compartment and handed it over to me telling, "Swami, don't go alone. There is a small living cricket in it which will give you company." As the train sped on, the cricket began its music, but the ear pain I contracted on the way made it impossible for me to appreciate it. Coming home I released the poor insect into the woods. The next day I received a nice letter from R— of whom I spoke in the beginning of this letter. In course of the letter I read:—

"This afternoon A— came for tea and has just left me. I read to her of Swami Brahmananda's vision of Christ in the book of Devamata you gave me. It went straight to her heart and oh! what joy it was for me to read it. I told her of other incidents in Ramakrishna's life and found that those stories can touch her more than anything and open new channels for understanding other people's thoughts. I told her of Ramakrishna's prayer 'Oh Mother, another day is gone, etc.' She was visibly moved and understands my love for Him. I felt in the end a missionary for Ramakrishna. Why is that we are so blessed in coming into contact with Him, and others are still so ignorant

of His presence? I really feel that if I did nothing else but give thanks for all He has given us, then my life would not be in vain. Something seems to stir so in me when I enter my room and see his photograph."

## TRUTH TO HIGHER TRUTH

BY SWAMI NISREYASANANDA

[The philosophical position of the Mandukyakarika will be explained from a new standpoint in this and some of the ensuing issues of *The Vedanta Kesari*.—The Editors.]

GAUDAPADA's Karikas on Mandukyopanishad and Sankara's commentary on them form a profitable study, provided we safeguard ourselves against certain pitfalls. When properly understood, they give us philosophical Truth. This Truth is neither Indian nor European, though Indian seers have realised It and preached It more than others. Like the truths of physics, philosophic Truth is not the peculiar monopoly of any race or religious group.

Philosophy embraces all fields of human activity, separately covered by the different sciences. Thus physics, chemistry, biology, sociology, psychology, economics and other fields of study come under its scheme of coordination. Religion is no exception. The field of Religion covers man's relations with the Supreme Being, the Creator of the universe. Since no special form of religion is meant here, we describe it as the field whose chief features include teachings mostly based on the revealed scriptures, theological explanations, scholastic interpretations and mystic practices. These practices range from rituals and prayers to different Yogic exercises, leading to visions and at the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi. If any one field alone is accepted as the sole factor in deciding the Highest Truth, we

shall have only a caricature of Life. It will be like indefinitely prolonging the note "Ni," the highest in any octave, and calling the result music! To avoid this defect of partial presentation of Truth, philosophy builds its edifice by using the valid conclusions of all fields, including religion, as its own starting point. Philosophic wisdom, thus, can never contradict religion or any other field. On the other hand it does the supreme service of lifting its votary to a level of harmony, from which every field of enquiry is realised as contributing its own quota of "relative truth." For purposes of study we may isolate the various fields; but philosophic wisdom must remove all sense of contradiction. The philosopher does not rise from error to Truth, but as Swami Vivekananda pointed out, from truth to higher truth.

Gaudapada's Karikas are valuable since they include the experiences of dream and deep sleep to supplement the bare waking standpoint usually covered by philosophers. We may wonder whether a philosophy built upon dream and sleep can teach anything better than to dream or sleep. But we shall find that this suspicion is childish if we embark upon its study with an *open* mind and sharpened power of reasoning. The common

pitfalls for a teacher or a student of the Karikas centre round the meanings given to terms like religion, Yoga, unreal, reasoning, creation, knowledge and so on. We shall take up a few of these in this article.

### RELIGION

First in order comes 'religion'. In Sanskrit it has no exact equivalent. Neither has English any exact equivalent for Dharma or Darsana. There are also no separate Sanskrit words to denote the English classification into theology, mysticism or scholasticism, which we in India often mistake for philosophy. We fail to keep in mind these handicaps when trying to express Indian ideas through a language which requires precision of this nature.

Vedas and their commentaries contain a good deal of material presented in a theological, mystic or scholastic manner. When the Mundaka Upanishad begins with the statement that Brahma became the first of the gods, it is pure theology. When Vedanta Sutras start the enquiry into Brahman "from which the creation etc., of the universe proceed," there is not much deviation made from theology. For the position that the world has been created by some one stands outside the field of enquiry still. Philosophy, however, must question all assumptions or *Avidya*, whether they stand or fall as a result of honest enquiry. It aims at their opposite, namely certainty, knowledge, *Vidya* or *Jnana*. But certain Upanishadic and other texts present things in a purely philosophic manner. The *Mandukya Karikas* come under this category. They question the reality of causation or creation as well.

One need not get upset by this registering of any manner of presentation as theological; for no contempt or irreverence is meant. The Karikas too cover the position taken by the Vedanta Sutras. But they make a substantial difference by adding one more perspective. The result is a more complete harmony. Theological and mystic positions are not contradicted or thrown away as useless. They are valued as "means for helping knowledge." Religious practice,—most, or the whole, of which is Yoga from the standpoint of Patanjali's Sutras or Bhagavad Gita—leads to God-vision or various Samadhis.

Why should not visions of Vishnu, Siva or Kali, or the attainment of Samadhi be given the place of the Highest Truth? The following is the reply from the philosophic standpoint.

### LIMITATIONS OF WORDS

#### AND THOUGHT

Words are useful for calling up ideas in the mind. In the case of ideas occurring frequently in daily life,—e.g., ideas about objects like a table or about actions like walking—words attain almost complete success. But when one has to convey to another ideas relating to aspects of mind-control, they become less and less efficient. The difficulty has been enhanced by the fact that different schools of thought have used identical words in different senses. Religion, Yoga, reasoning and other words mentioned above fall within this group. Wise men have from times immemorial realised this inherent defect of words in the field of religion or philosophy. They have therefore warned us against taking them in too

literal a sense. "Unattainable by words," "That from which words recoil along with mind" are expressions often met with in Sanskrit works. To prevent too prosaic a meaning from being accepted, many sages have expressed their ideas through poetry, employing various figures of speech and even parables. Who does not remember the Upanishadic attempt to correct our ideas of "creation of the world" by using a series of similes, one neutralising the defects of another? Who does not also remember how Jesus often wound up his parables with the pregnant remark, "Those that have ears, let them hear!" Even when the greatest sages, with such precautions, teach the disciples<sup>1</sup> who live with them day and night, only a few of the hearers properly understand, some even wrongly understand, while others fail to understand anything at all. As often as we read or hear words, then, we must, as we advance in spiritual life, avoid giving them too literal a sense. We must step behind name and form, Nama-rupa as the Upanishads call it, and "grasp" the meaning intended.

Vishnu, Siva and other forms are aspects of Divinity perceived by the aspirant when certain conditions are fulfilled. Mystics in all ages have had diverse experiences of this kind. It is not a sign of wisdom to thrust aside these valid experiences and call them impossibilities or worthless illusions. There is a law by which hopes and eager expectations of a duly con-

trolled aspirant can 'condense,' as it were the Divine into a Presence as "tangible" as the objects of our waking condition now. The religious teacher, if competent, can also impress the disciple<sup>2</sup> with any such Personal or Impersonal aspect, so that the latter can realise that same aspect as true wherever his perception alights. Every day, without consulting our tastes or opinions, our physical growth is managed or a world of dreams is spread out before our perception. A certain "creative" power accomplishes this. When refined and regulated, this same power makes visions possible. From the philosophical position, Mandukya Karikas fully accept this truth. About eleven Karikas (II: 19-29) deal with this topic. We are told that those competent aspirants who accept Reality as Prana,—being impressed that way by the teacher—do realise It as Prana, while those who consider It as Loka, Veda, Creation or any nameable "entity" realise It in a corresponding manner.

Usually teachers or aspirants cling to an aspect or two among these possibilities. Hence such people, if they have no philosophical outlook, become responsible for separate cults, each accepting its own experiences as the only valid ones and condemning those of others as "illusions." This has also resulted in quarrels between religions, in mutual vilifications and in the mania for proselytisation. This does not mean that religions have not done their duty or that the sages and

<sup>1</sup> लोके अपि एकस्माद् गुरोः शृणतां कश्चिद्यथाव-  
स्ततिपश्यते, कश्चिद्यथावत् कश्चिद्विपरीतं, कश्चिन्न  
प्रतिपश्यते । (Kena II. Sankara's  
Commentary.)

<sup>2</sup> ये भावं दर्शयेदस्य सं भावं स तु पश्यति  
तं चावति भूत्वासौ तद्वाहः समुपैति तस् ॥ Mandukya Karikas II, 29. See also  
commentary by Sankara.

teachers specialised in mutual contradictions. Religions are valid paths leading to certain realisations to this day, if any one cares sincerely to practise them. It is we, the unwary students of the sages, who take their descriptions in too literal a manner and stress the distinctions of name and form in place of the Principle, which cannot be adequately described. Philosophy, from a higher standpoint, admits the truth of *all* these experiences. The sages "knew" the Highest Reality which is beyond thought and speech. But when they tried to communicate their experience to others, each teacher selected words current in the society at the time. We of a latter time fail to see the limitations of words. Often too, owing to our strong likes and dislikes, we behave like Virochana of the Chandogya Upanishad and pervert the meanings to suit our uncontrolled ways. To say that religion or the sages have created quarrels is thus an unjust accusation. If we rise to philosophical heights ourselves, we shall find that they all tried to express the same Truth.

In modern days Sri Ramakrishna was one of the unique men who prac-

tised the disciplines laid down by a number of cults. Throwing himself heart and soul into any practice he took up, he was able to realise the Truth through each of them. He saw that Rama could be realised as Kausalya or Hanuman saw him, or Krishna as Radha saw him, or Jesus as his disciples saw him. He also entered into the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Enriched by these first-hand experiences, a true philosopher as he was, he could teach, as no other, that all paths lead to the same Goal, which by itself is beyond all human specifications. God, according to him, is the only "Entity" not made impure by being spat out in the shape of words. All Divine Forms and even the Formless are valid experiences attainable by aspirants of different temperaments in accordance with the intensity and suitability of their practice. All this is fully in keeping with Mandukya Karika position. We have only to add that the Highest Truth, if beyond these truths of religion and mysticism, is simultaneously beyond the scope of names and forms as well. It is, in this sense, Silence.

## GOOD AND BAD: HOW TO TRANSCEND THEM?

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants at Wiesbaden, Germany, in December 1933.—The Editors.]

### I

Devotee: Why is it that evil thoughts arise in the mind?

Sri Ramakrishna: In His world we find such a diversity. He has made good men and He has also made bad men. Some He gives good tendencies and others, bad tendencies.

Devotee: Then we are not responsible for our sins?

Sri Ramakrishna: You must remember that this is also God's law that if you commit sin you must take the consequence. If you take chillies do you not feel the burning sensation? Mathur Babu, during his youth, did many bad and impure

things, and therefore before the time of his death he suffered from many ailments. During the time of one's youth one cannot reap all the consequences of one's impure deeds.

Devotee: Sir, why has He created evil men?

Sri Ramakrishna: His will. His play. In His Maya we see both, good and evil. There is need for darkness too, so that the glory of the light shall manifest all the more. He has given us lust, anger, greed, all these bad things. But why? So that He may make great men out of us. If one controls one's senses, one becomes great. And what cannot the man of sense-control achieve! Through the Lord's grace he comes to have even Divine realization! The Lord has made all sorts of things, good and bad. There are good trees and poisonous trees. There are weeds too. Among animals also we find some are good and some are bad,—the tiger, the lion, the snake and all these!

—From *Kathamrita*.

In the answers given above to the questions of the devotee Sri Ramakrishna hints at the truth that it is not possible to find a satisfactory explanation for good and evil, so long as we remain on the phenomenal plain—the plain of gross and subtle manifestation. But it is possible to transcend them both, to go beyond both good and evil and beyond the whole domain of manifestation and reach Truth as It is. No man who does not lead a perfectly pure life in body and in thought can even reach such a state. Without strict discipline and sense-control in every respect, the problem of good and evil and their why and wherefore can never be solved; and we just go on groping about in the dark, helpless, growing more and more bewildered by what life brings us. That is why Buddha never wished to give any metaphysical explanations

about God etc., to his disciples. The impure mind can never grasp any Truth about the Divine, so it is useless to tell impure minds the truth which they cannot grasp. Without previous purification all such discussions are useless and waste of time. Buddha said, "When the house is on fire, do you first inquire into the origin of that fire or do you run and extinguish it first?" Our task is to get out of this whirlpool somehow or other, and not to go into deep metaphysical speculations about the Ultimate Truth and the reason of good and evil. Both are there. So we have to face them, whether we know their reason or not, and the only way of facing them is to transcend both good and evil and reach a state where both are not. Empty discussions about good and evil and why God created them are useless and lead nowhere. This Sri Ramakrishna has shown again and again, and we should try to realize Truth, not to discuss problems belonging to the phenomenal plain or to raise wonderful philosophic structures which, after all, do not mean anything as they do not transform our lives.

## II

There is a time when good and evil exist for the spiritual man, and there is a time when both good and evil no longer exist in any form; but there can never be a time when good alone exists. You cannot just take one side of a pair of opposites and refuse to take the other also. So long as you try to do this, you will never find a satisfactory solution.

To the extent we are pure, we feel peace. To the extent we are selfless, we feel an expansion of the soul. To

the extent we are truly dispassionate and non-attached, we become free. To-day our task is to drive the good thought deep into the mind, so that the whole mind may become coloured by it. The whole difficulty for the beginner is to colour the whole mind with the Divine idea.

Really speaking, it is the Divine in us that makes us pray. It is the first cause of our prayer and of our turning to It. Our true Self is eternally within us and we follow Its promptings when we begin to pray sincerely and intensely. It is not that we choose to pray. And the Divine we pray to are we ourselves, *i.e.*, that which is the Self in us, not any of the Upadhis (the limitating adjuncts)—nothing that belongs to the body or the mind.

There is such a thing as evolution of matter, but there is no such thing absolutely as the evolution of the spirit. "Of that being which is ever unborn, birth is predicated by some; but it is impossible that the unborn and the immortal could ever partake of the mortal. The immortal does not become mortal, or vice versa; for in no way is it possible that a thing can be changed into something quite the opposite." (*Gaudapada*.) There is no such thing as evolution seen from the standpoint of the Self. Evolution belongs to the relative plain of Maya alone. I do not evolve into my own eternal Self. It is there all the time. It neither undergoes evolution nor involution. It imagines Itself to do this; but It never actually does. You are always the witness of your own actions and of your own mentation.

Make the body finer, make the mind finer, make the heart more non-attached and pure. Practise strict, unbroken

continence in deed and in thought. Avoid all association with worldly-minded people, then you build up a better mental body which will be a great help to you in your spiritual struggle. Company, association, plays a great part. Never associate freely with persons of the other sex, even if they seem to be pure. If you do, there will never be any progress for you, nor will you ever be able to eliminate and efface old impure impressions. Then everything just becomes a vicious circle and nothing more. So be constantly on your guard.

### III

The body has to be made rhythmic, the mind has to be made rhythmic. The building up of a purer mind is the most difficult task in spiritual life. Stress Brahmacharya (continence) constantly. Lead a perfectly pure life; avoid all association with the other sex; even in thought. Be very careful about your company, even about that of your own sex, because a person of your own sex who does not lead a pure life or mixes with inimoral people brings their subtle vibrations also to you; and these always affect your mind. May be you are not yet sensitive enough to feel this, but subconsciously they always do. Never believe you can progress if you are not on your guard. We need continence in thought, word and deed to make this body and mind very subtle and sensitive instruments of the Self. We must make them cleaner and cleaner, so that they can give better reflections of the Truth. Your whole nerve-current must change. It must be made to flow upward. Your body must change. Your mind must change. It is not an easy task at all.

Some may tell you that Brahmacharya (continence) is harmful to the body. All that is nonsense. The Western world has become so nervous through incontinence. Everywhere you come across these nervous wrecks, men and women, and they have not become so by leading too pure a life. In the case of a person who leads a perfectly pure life, the nerves become much stronger. If you lead a very chaste life, you build up an exceptionally strong body. The purer you become mentally, the purer you become physically also. To the extent we lead a purer life, that finds its expression in the face too. You can always tell what kind of life a person is leading by studying his face, once you have developed the capacity of reading it. Continence must be very much stressed. It removes all the base fibres from the face. Mentally you feel perfectly fresh and elastic. Mentally you feel young if you are continent. Here you see so many people who have a lewd look on their faces. Sometimes they hurt me when I pass them in the street. There is such a lot of sexual perversity in all these faces. You can tell at a distance. The person leading a pure life always has a look of straightforwardness and simplicity, a great personal charm of a very special kind. Purity is the very root of all forms of spiritual life, and with the higher thought purity becomes easy.

Mind tends to go to the plain of sex, and if you have the sex-impulse without being able to raise the centre of your consciousness effectively, you will never be able to resist it in the long run. That is why I am warning you so much about company. It will take time till you can efface all the

old impure impressions, all the dirt and filth you have allowed to accumulate in the mind, and you will never be able to see the end of this cleaning process if you are not careful in the company you choose to keep. There must be no awakening of old memories through associating with people. Change the nerve-current at once, the moment you feel any sexual temptation, and do not allow yourself to be in the company of persons belonging to the other sex, no matter whether they be pure or not. This you will have to do for some time to come. It is difficult to erase old impure impressions, but it has to be done, if such impure impressions have been taken in through leading a careless life.

The best way to disarm woman is by looking upon her as Mother, never by hating her. See Mother in her, but salute her from a safe distance. Never rely on your own strength at present. It will fail you. Never allow old memories to come up and tempt you by meeting people who may rouse them in you. You cannot be careful enough in all this if you really want to progress. Be very dignified in your behaviour to women as well as men; and make all women understand once for all, that they will not be allowed to look upon you as a man, that you will not suffer them to approach you in any other light except in the light of a sexless spiritual entity. If you allow women to become free or familiar with you, your foot will slip sooner or later. You cannot take any risk so long as the old impressions in your mind are not completely effaced. I have seen a good number of aspirants in India who came to grief through sheer carelessness.

ness on this point. There are many who cannot appreciate the necessity of these prescriptions, but you can believe me. I have seen many people, many different types and characters, and I had to study them all very minutely if I wanted to help them.

There are many who cannot grasp the necessity of sex-purity in spiritual life; but without sex-purity in its three aspects, thought, word and deed, there can be no spiritual life at all. All those who have been leading a really spiritual life know all this from their own experience. It is not just mere words. Avoid the other sex as much as possible for a long time to come. There are many old impure impressions to erase in your mind.

Never underrate the value of what I am telling you now. The beginner should never dare to give the enemy a frontal attack, and during your Sadhana you will find what an amount of trouble these old impressions are going to create for you. So always be on your guard and do not rely on your own strength so long as traces of the old impure impressions are still left and so long as there are still sensual desires in you.

#### IV

Sri Ramakrishna: On seeing the attitude of a child (in the devotee regarding women) the Divine Maya hides Herself from one's path out of the sheer sense of shame.

Devotee: Sir, why have you given up the world? The Scriptures speak of the householder's life as the greatest.\*

Sri Ramakrishna: I do not know much of what is good or what is bad. I do

\* Here Sri Ramakrishna just avoids giving an answer to the worldly-minded person for whom real instruction would have been valueless.

whatever the Lord makes me do. I say whatever He makes me say.

Devotee: If all people give up the world that would be going against the will of the Lord.

Sri Ramakrishna: Why should all people give up, and again is it the Lord's will that all should get themselves merged in the enjoyment of Woman and Gold, and lead the lives of cats and dogs? Have you known what He wills and what He does not? You say, His will is to lead a family-life. When the wife dies, why don't you see there also the will of the Lord? When you starve, when there is illness and poverty and faithlessness, why don't you see there too the will of the Lord?

It is owing to Maya that you do not know the Lord's will, and it is due to His Maya that the unreal appears to you to be real and the real unreal. The world is constantly changing. Now it is and then it ceases to be, but owing to Maya it appears to be real. It is owing to Maya that we believe ourselves to be the doers, and also that we have all these: wife and children, father and mother, house, property, etc. And in this Maya there is both Vidya and Avidya. Avidya makes one forget God and cling to the world—Woman and Gold; while Vidya, which is devotion and holy company, takes one Godward.

He who through God's grace goes beyond Maya looks upon both Vidya and Avidya with complete indifference.

—From *Kalhamrita*.

You find very many grown-up people who have a child mentality. They will never give up their playthings, all their human dolls. The more we play, the more playthings we want. We want to go on playing eternally. Only very few children grow tired of playing and give their minds to something more serious. No doubt, there are some very troublesome children who stop their play and begin to cry. They give no rest to God and are bound to get Him. There is such a nice parable of Sri Ramakrishna illustrating the general attitude of man.

## V

Vishnu was once sitting in His heavenly abode with His consort. All of a sudden Lakshmi saw that He was getting up in a great hurry. She said, "What is the matter?" Vishnu replied, "Just wait a moment. I must at once go and look after a devotee of Mine who is in danger. I must protect him." As a matter of fact, a devotee of Vishnu was to get a good thrashing from some enemies of his. After a short time, however, Vishnu returned. Lakshmi asked Him, "What is the matter now? Why are you back so soon?" "O," replied Vishnu, "I was not necessary at all. The devotee had already taken the Law into his own hands and given the enemies a good thrashing. So what was the use of My coming to his protection?"

## VI

If we depend wholly on Him, He comes to our aid, but if we do what we please, we come to grief. We cannot have two feet in two different boats. But real self-surrender is a very hard thing and cannot be attained without great struggle and perseverance.

The inner voice becomes still, as soon as we turn deaf ears to it. Many people talk of this 'inner voice,' but in most cases it is nothing more than their own higher moral sense. The voice of the Divine cannot be heard so easily as these people imagine.

We cannot be expert divers all of a sudden. We must dive deep, but first we must train ourselves properly. The diver does not get the precious pearls if he does not even reach the bed of the oysters.

First we must shake off this mental lethargy. We must so train the mind

that, at least to some extent, we shall be able always to have the thought of the Divine. One current should constantly be flowing Godward, while in the other part of the mind bubbles may rise and try to create troubles. Always keep part of your mind engaged with the Divine.

We should strictly avoid the company of the evil-minded and all those who do not lead pure lives, whether they be of our own sex or of the other sex. We should seek the company of the good and holy. If I meet a man who leads an impure life or mixes with impure people it is as bad as if I were in the company of the other sex myself.

## VII

You see, it is this. The mind that has once become dirty and full of all sorts of filth cannot be cleansed without great and prolonged effort. If I take a match, and it slips out of my fingers and falls into a puddle, it gets wet. And once having got wet, it cannot be struck any more. So the first task is to make it dry again. Then it can be struck and will leap into a nice flame at once. Hence the question of company and of strict ethical culture and mental culture is of such great importance. How to dry the soiled mind, that is the point. Do not let us brood over the fact that we have allowed it to get soiled and highly impure. Let us cleanse it. Let us do everything to make it pure, so that it will give clearer and clearer reflections of the truth. Brooding leads the aspirant just nowhere.

The mind is soiled, has become dirty. There is no doubt about that. There is no doubt about our having led a careless, impulsive life. So, now,

the mind can no longer take on the colour of the Divine. Try to dye a dirty linen. It is impossible. First you must wash it, then dye it. Set fire to all your worldly desires and then cleanse the mind with the ashes that are formed. It must be some good chemical cleaning. The mind has become so dirty. Whose fault?

Below the surface-layers, there is the true metal, and that metal, as such, can never be soiled. So there is the possibility of cleaning it. But it needs a lot of rubbing and scrubbing. The electric wire has these surface-layers of silk, and they may become dirty, and even the metal may become dirty to a certain extent and thereby a non-conductor, but it can be cleaned. It is good to throw away the silk altogether, to burn it. In our case, in the case of the beginner, the 'silk' is only half-burnt. That is the whole trouble. We are not fully sincere. Otherwise just one single gust of wind would sweep it all away.

"This heart of ours, which has been burnt by the fire of the world,  
O Lord, do Thou revive it with the

*mantram* that brings back life to the dead."

The Holy Name revives, as it were, the heart that has become dead by all the worldly dirt of our desires and inordinate affections which it has accumulated. It brings new hopes in place of the old deceptive ones that are lost and burnt. It brings love in place of the old impure affections that have become ashes and are gone for ever. It brings peace in place of the shadow of peace at which we thought to clutch now and then, but which always again slipped out of our fingers. In place of falsehood it brings truth. In place of uncertainty and desire it brings certainty and dispassion, because there is no want in the Divine, and he who has realized it does not lack anything.

Let us all struggle day and night to attain the purification of our mind and let us see that we do not accumulate any new dirt by our carelessness. Let us strictly follow the instructions we are given, for only then can the cleansing process be accomplished and spiritual life become a reality.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy:** By Anagarika B. Gorinda. Published by the Patna University, Patna. Pages 271. Price Rs. 5.

The book gives, in the first place, a review of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism and then proceeds to show the lines along which the early Buddhist scriptures analyse the human consciousness. The author has tried to show how in the Buddhist study of man, there is an intertwining of metaphysics and psychology, and how both these are pursued not with a barren professional interest but with a view

to their life-giving value. The Buddhist psychology would be of special interest to the modern mind as it offers a scheme of analysis of the human consciousness without positing any permanent and unchanging spiritual nucleus like the soul. In this respect Buddhism is in agreement with many of what are called the modern systems of scientific psychology, but it parts company with them in that it finds in human consciousness a layer of awareness called 'Bodhi' which is higher than sensuous perception and rationality, the ordinary ways of acquiring knowledge. The concept of Bodhi corresponds to what

is called intuition in the great mystical tradition of all religions. A study of a subject like this which is thus in agreement with some of the dominant tendencies of both science and religion, will be of great interest to the modern mind, and the author's wealth of scholarship and knowledge of comparative religion and philosophy have all the more added to the value of his presentation of this interesting theme. The many charts illustrating various planes of consciousness and their inter-relation and functioning are both ingenious and instructive.

**Medieval Jainism:** *By B. A. Saletoro.*  
Published by Karnatak Publishing House,  
Bombay 2. Price Rs. 5. Pages 426.

This is a historical work dealing with the progress of Jainism in Southern and Western India, in the empires of Gangas, Kadambas, Western Chalukyas, Hoysalas and the Vijayanagara Kings. That means kaleidoscopic sketch of the fortunes of a great faith over a long period ranging from the 2nd to the 16th century A.D. In dealing with this interesting subject, it is important to note that the author has specially concentrated his attention on the great influence exercised by it on contemporary life in all its phases—literary, artistic, social and political. The author rightly remarks that the vitality of a religious movement is to be measured not only by its philosophical and theological speculations, but by the way in which it affects the political and cultural life around. He shows that in this respect the influence of great Jain ascetics had led to the founding of powerful empires and directed the life and politics of great kings and statesmen. It was dear to the hearts of the classes as well as the masses and enjoyed patronage of both. As a consequence Jainism, though exotic to the Deccan and South India, having migrated to these places after its decline in the North—its original home—, had a brilliant career in the land of its adaptation and played a dominant part in the political and cultural life of the people there. The book is scholarly, but is yet adapted to the needs of the general readers. It contains also five illustrations of considerable artistic value.

**The Hindu Philosophy of Conduct: Being class-lectures on the Bhagavadgita by the late M. Rangacharya, M.A., Rao Bahadur, Professor of Sanskrit and comparative Philology, Presidency College, Madras.**  
Publisher: G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras. Pages 483+20.  
Price Rs. 5.

This is the third and the last volume of Mr. Rangacharya's class-lectures on the Gita delivered under the auspices of the Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha several years ago. The whole series is complete in 87 lectures. The first 31 lectures covering the first six chapters of the Gita were published during the author's life-time under his own attention, and the book was welcomed by all competent to judge its merits. A couple of years ago the worthy son of the author gave to the public a second volume containing the lectures on the next *Shatka* of the Bhagavad Gita, which is now followed by the remaining portion. Although these two volumes were not fortunate to get the author's editorial care, we are told by his son that they are "published almost exactly as they were delivered," the liberty taken by the publishers being only a few verbal alterations, excision of some superfluous repetitions and the insertion of the translation of certain verses which the author had not made separately. But they were embedded in his explanations. We have now thus a complete study of the Gita by one who was well known for his versatile genius, profound scholarship and integrity of character.

The out-put of Gita literature has enormously increased in recent years; but few volumes of real worth are produced. It is satisfying to see that even the trashy writings are an indication of the deep interest excited in the modern mind by this august scripture. To have a thorough and scholarly understanding of the Gita in the original a vast and profound knowledge of the religious and philosophical literature of Sanskrit which supplies the atmosphere to the Gita is essential. A reliable exposition of the text in English is therefore the only help available for those whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not of the nature described. The recent English books on Gita, viz., Tilak's *Gitarahasya*

(2 vols.) Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on Gita* (2 vols.) and Prof. Rangacharya's class-lectures (3 vols.) are therefore indispensable for those who want to take up a deep study of the Gita, and who do not possess a special scholarship in the religious literature of Sanskrit. The above-mentioned three books very well form a library of Hindu Ethics, Devotion and philosophy to the modern reader. Of these Prof. Rangacharya's volume may be recommended to start with, because of its lucidity and freedom from any metaphysical basis or espousal of any special ethical theory.

Although his treatment is tediously elaborate at places, having gone through them, one feels a definite gain not only for the luminous suggestions received in unlocking the treasure contained in the Gita, but also for the general enlightenment afforded on several religious and ethical questions. Since there is no attempt to criticise the views of the great Acharyas anywhere and his attitude towards them being one of profound reverence these lectures will prove dear to all whether they may be modern or traditional in outlook. We wish a wide circulation of these volumes.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira

#### A RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE AT BELUR

Swami Madhavananda, Secretary Ramakrishna Mission, writes:—

The public are aware that in accordance with the scheme of Swami Vivekananda we are trying to start a Residential College for youngmen at Belur in the district of Howrah. Realising the need of imparting a knowledge of the morals and religion along with wholesome secular education, the great Swami was extremely eager to establish a Vidyamandira at the Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Order. But his untimely exit from the world prevented an early fulfilment of his desire. Following in his footsteps, the Ramakrishna Mission has been conducting various educational activities for nearly half a century, but up till now it has not been able to take up his scheme of the Vidyamandira. Swamiji desired that a University should grow at Belur Math, with religion as its pivot and combining Oriental with Occidental learning. It will require a huge expenditure of money as well as time to materialise this scheme in full. But we think the time has come for starting, as the first step to it, a Residential College for the youngmen after the model of the ancient Gurukula, and gradually building it up. There are a few High Schools and a large number Primary Schools under the Mission. But the majority of the boys in our country have to enter into a vitiated atmosphere away from their homes, just

when they attain their youth. If at this juncture of their life, they get the opportunity of receiving a higher education amid congenial moral and spiritual environment, then they may be expected to turn into decent citizens in future and devote themselves to the service of their country and religion.

With this object in view we are trying for the present to establish at Belur a Residential I.A. College affiliated to the Calcutta University. Later on we should like to open industrial, agricultural and other sections in order to provide the students with a means of livelihood along with general education in arts and science. In the fulness of time the institution may develop into an independent University.

We propose to start the Vidyamandira on a plot of land measuring about 13 acres to the west of the Belur Math. Some of this land has already been purchased, and the rest is being acquired for the College through the Government, the notification about which has recently been published. For the initial cost of the land and College building etc. we want at least Rs. 50,000 immediately. Out of this Rs. 10,000 has been contributed by an American lady devotee of Swami Vivekananda, and some more has been donated or promised by a few friends in this country. With this small amount at our disposal we have ventured to make a beginning.

We need not emphasise the necessity of an institution like this to our countrymen. As in the West, in this country also there

is no dearth of generous people who, feeling in their heart of hearts the utility of proper education for our youths, are ready to spend what they can in furtherance of this object. To them we specially appeal to help us in this new enterprise. We sincerely hope that with their assistance we shall be able to start a nucleus of this great scheme of Swamiji in the coming year. Contributions will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

**The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama  
Silchar, 1938.**

This branch of the Ramakrishna Mission like its other branches is directing its activities towards the amelioration of physical, intellectual and spiritual sides of man. During the period under review it held 100 religious classes and discourses. During the birthday anniversaries of Holy Mother, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda five public meetings were organised. The Sevashrama runs 4 night schools which had 117 students on the rolls during the year under report. The library attached to the Sevashrama contains 1040 books, 4 magazines and 4 newspapers. The Sevashrama conducts a students' Home also, where eighteen boys were given accommodation. Nine lantern lectures were arranged during the year in the different parts of the Cachar District and Lushai and Cachar Hills. The Sevashrama maintains a weaving section also, where three looms were regularly at work during the year under report. The total receipts during the year were Rs. 3,171-7-0, including the balance of the previous year. The total expenditure was Rs. 2867-4-9, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 204-2-3.

The Sevashrama immediately requires Rs. 4,500 to complete the main house and to erect a library building and a hall.

**The Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur, 1938.**

This branch of the Mission is doing excellent work in the industrial town of Jamshedpur made famous by the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Ltd. It tries to meet the religious need of the people by holding three weekly religious classes in three different areas of the town. Besides, special meetings were arranged, devotional

music and Jatra performances were held, which tried to instil spiritual ideas in the minds of the ordinary public. Birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was also celebrated with due eclat.

The society conducts two libraries. The number of books in the main library was 1381. The number of books issued was 3052. In the Free reading room of the library there were 5 daily papers, 2 weeklies and 10 monthly magazines. The other library had 318 books and issued 402 books during the year.

The society runs four primary day schools and one night school. There were 328 students in these schools at the end of the year. The total expenditure on the schools during the year was Rs. 3,799-7-0.

The society also maintains a Students' Home where 10 students were given accommodation.

The society as usual did the following social works:

- (1) Nursing patients in the Hospital when necessary.
- (2) Nursing patients at their houses.
- (3) Cremating the dead.
- (4) Occasional pecuniary help.

(5) And other philanthropic activities in collaboration with the Welfare Department of the Tata Iron and Steel Co., Ltd.

The total receipts during the year under review including opening balance were Rs. 7,000-9-6 and the amount of expenditure was Rs. 6,222-8-9 leaving a closing balance of Rs. 778-0-9 only.

The society urgently needs a building for the Hindi section of the schools and the rebuilding of the Night school. A separate block for the students' Home and more rooms for the Workers' quarters are also pressing necessities.

**An Appeal for Famine Relief  
in Dhrasa Thana**

Nearly half of Kathiawar is affected with famine conditions this year. Dhrasa Thana which consists of thirty scattered villages on the borderline of Nawanagar, Porbandar and Gondal States is one of the most affected areas in the Western Kathiawar Agency. People have been reduced to a state of utter helplessness in maintaining their families and cattle. Many cattle have died and those which are living are very likely to die if no timely

help for their protection is forthcoming. Many families have begun to show signs of half-starvation. Feeling the necessity of adopting relief measures in the Thana, the Agency authorities have invited co-operation of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, for organising and conducting relief activities. The Ashrama authorities have, therefore, formed a local Advisory Committee with official and non-official members having the Political Agent, Western Kathiawar Agency as its patron. The Political Agent has also kindly given his personal note which has been reproduced below.

The work of giving gratuitous relief in the form of distributing grains to the poor, old, decrepit and invalid persons has already been undertaken. Arrangements have also been made for giving *tagavi* loans to the cultivators and steps are being taken for deepening old wells and sinking new ones.

The committee has contemplated to take the following measures for which public help is badly needed:—

Gratuitous relief on a larger scale;  
Opening of cheap grain shops;  
Distribution of clothes, blankets etc. in winter;  
Distribution of medicines and  
Opening of cattle camp.

The Committee feels the necessity of starting the above-mentioned relief activities as soon as possible; so, it appeals to all benevolent persons and charitable Societies to stretch their helping hands to this noble cause. All contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at any of the following addresses:—

1. President, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar;
2. President, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Khar, Bombay 21;
3. Secretary, Famine Relief Committee, Dhrafa, Kathiawar.

(Sd.) Swami Atmaswarupananda,  
*President,*

Dhrafa Famine Relief Committee.  
The Dhrafa Thana area is one of the

worst-hit areas in the whole of Kathiawar. It forms part of no big State, can draw on the resources of no wealthy administration, contains no citizens of substance. The Ramakrishna Mission have already started work here at my urgent request and have already rendered invaluable aid. I earnestly commend this appeal for the relief of real distress.

(Sd.) A. J. Hopkinson,  
Rajkot, *Political Agent,*  
9th Nov. '39 Western Kathiawar Agency.

**Mayavati Charitable Dispensary  
and Hospital, 1938.**

The Mayavati Dispensary and Hospital, established in 1903, with modest equipment has since grown into a full-fledged dispensary, residential and otherwise. It is in charge of a monastic member qualified for the task. During the year under review an M.B. has also been appointed to increase the efficiency of the work. There is at present accommodation for 12 indoor patients. But such is the demand on the Hospital that for about six months of the year arrangements had to be made for 20 patients. So, an extension of the building is urgently needed. This can be taken up early if public help is forthcoming. The Dispensary and Hospital have an up-to-date operation room and a small clinical laboratory. Thus it has been endeavoured to bring as much of medical help as is possible to these poor people of the mountainous region who are completely cut off from the amenities of civilised life.

Total number of patients treated during the year at the out-door dispensary was 15,426 of which 11,115 were new cases. In the Indoor Hospital the total number treated was 243. The total amount of receipt during the year including opening balance and also an ear-marked sum of Rs. 1,16,000 for investment was Rs. 1,20,805-12-7. The amount of expenditure was Rs. 1,15,687-14-4, including the sum of Rs. 1,09,531-12-1 spent in purchasing G. P. Notes, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 5,117-14-3.

## **BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY**

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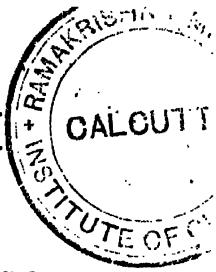
<b>SRI SRI SARADAMANI DEVI</b>	.... 1st January, 1940
<b>SRIMAT SWAMI VIVEKANANDA</b>	.... 31st January, ..
<b>SRI SRI RAMAKRISHNA</b>	.... 11th March, ..

THE  
VEDANTA KESARI

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BRAHMACHARYA

The verses abstracted below glorify absolute continence which has a religious and altruistic background.

कायं योगस्तनुरुणतुलात्यक्तभोगाभियोगः  
क्वायं निन्यः क्षणसुखलवास्वादसंवाद एवः ।  
जात्यैवायं हृति कुशलं दुस्तरो मारमार्गः  
प्रेमान्धानां भवति सहसा दुस्सहो योक्तव्यातः ॥ १ ॥

वामावर्ते विषयजलधौ पूर्णलावण्यसारे  
दर्पोत्सर्पद्विषमकरगाङ्गोद्वक्षोभमाणे ।  
नित्यासनप्रवलविरहप्रज्वलद्वाडवान्नौ  
पुंसां संतुस्तरणशरणे तीव्रवैराग्यमेव ॥ २ ॥

लावण्याम्भः प्राचिताङ्गास्तस्यणः ; पीयूषार्द्दः स्वर्गसम्भोगवर्गः ।  
अस्थाशेषत्यागहेतासुखस्य स्पर्धाविन्धे पांसुनिस्सार एव ॥ ३ ॥  
सता सदसतीर्नास्ति रागः पश्यति रम्यताम् ।  
स तस्य ललितो लोकः यो यस्य दयितो जनः ॥ ४ ॥  
मोहान्धकूपस्य जनस्य नान्तर्धर्मोपदेशाकंकरा विशन्ति ।  
रागात्मुरणामुदयेऽपि भानोर्धोरान्धकाराणि दिग्नतराणि ॥ ५ ॥

असूर्यगिनस्तापः क्षतद्युतिरशापश्च निरयः  
तमथानुकतान्धं विषमविषवद्द्रव्यभुजगः ।  
असंहि क्षीबलं निपतनमनिम्नं तनुभृता-  
मभूजीन्मादः स स्मरजनितरागः स्मृतिहरः ॥ ६ ॥  
नौपदेशं न नियमं न दाक्षिण्यं न साधुताम् ।  
स्मरन्ति जन्तवः कामं कामस्य वशमागताः ॥ ७ ॥  
अहोऽक्षनिर्विचाराणां सन्मार्गविमुखं मनः ।  
असंयमासवक्षीबमपयेष्वेद धावति ॥ ८ ॥

विषयात्मादसङ्गेन पापभिक्षैरिवेन्द्रियैः ।  
दुस्सहव्यसनावर्ते पाप्यते नरके नरः ॥ ९ ॥

येऽन्नमशन्ति लौल्येन निशि निदासुखापहम् ।  
जन्मकर्म कथं कुरुः परलोकसुखाय ते ॥ १० ॥

संसारसुखपान्यानामेवं कर्म शुभाशुभम् ।  
पथेयमिव हस्तस्थं भोगायैवोपपद्यते ॥ ११ ॥

विवेकव्यस्तदेषाणां विदुषां शीलशालिनाम् ।  
निस्सारसुखलाभेन नाकार्ये धीः प्रवर्तते ॥ १२ ॥

प्राणभूतं चरित्रस्य परब्रह्मैककारणम् ।  
समाचरन् ब्रह्मचर्यं पूजितैरपि पूज्यते ॥ १३ ॥

जयन्ति ते जन्मभयप्रमुक्ताः भवप्रभावाभिभवाभियुक्ताः ।  
यैः सुन्दरीलोचनचक्रवर्ती मारः कृतः शासनचक्रवर्ती ॥ १४ ॥

येर्नुत्यानिललोलवाललनावल्लीविलासानुगाः  
वीणावंशरवा विवाहसमये प्रोत्साहितैर्न श्रुताः ।  
हा पुत्रेति वधूप्रलापकलनङ्गीबा न तेषां श्रुतौ  
श्र्वन्ते गुरुबाष्पगद्वगद्वाढाभियोगा गिरः ॥ १५ ॥

गुणे स्वृहा न द्रविणे कदचित् योगाभियोगः प्रसमं न भोगे ।  
पुण्योज्ज्वलानां विशदाशयानां रजोविरागाभिरतिर्न कामे ॥ १६ ॥

कान्तां नूतनसङ्गमोत्सुकवर्ती दिव्यप्रभावां श्रियं  
तारुण्याभरणोपभोगलहरीं त्यक्त्वा ठणक्रीडया ।  
प्राणत्राणविधौ परस्य कृपया कुर्वन्ति ये सादगः  
निव्याजं निजदेहदानमचलं तानेव वन्दामहे ॥ १७ ॥

Spirituality and sensuality—Yoga and Bhoga—are at antipodes to each other. Yoga entails the giving over of all fleshly cravings without the least regret. Bhoga, even a bit of it—momentary as it is—, is not welcome to the spiritual aspirant even as a news. It is the very nature of lust that its road—almost insurmountable as it is—ruins one's spiritual well-being. Those who are stricken and blinded by sexual love find it unbearable to submit to other bonds. (1) The pursuit of pleasure may be described as an ocean, of which sex-craving forms the eddies, masculine and feminine charm its pervading salinity, arrogant upsurge of terrible passion excited by lust its heaving surface and the ever-haunting, virulent fire of mutual longing engendered by separation of the beloved the subterranean conflagration. If man wants to cross such a sea, true renunciation alone can form a safe bund for

him. (2). Matched with the happiness of utter renunciation embarked without the least pang, beauties brimming over with every charm and grace and celestial luxurics sprinkled with ambrosia are as trivial as a particle of dust. (3).

Beauty and ugliness are not two independent existences; it is fondness that paints beauty over objects. He or she is charming to a person who is his or her beloved. (4). The daylight of religious instruction does not enter into the dark chamber of a deluded man's heart. He is just like a dry well grown over with jugles, and sheltering darkness for ages. Even when the sun is up in the sky the sex-obsessed see darkness everywhere. (5).

The madness of sex-attraction deals a severe blow to one's memory. It scorches one without any exposure to sun or fire; it cripples will-power; it is a hell into which one is flung without anybody's curse; it is gloom inexpressible; it is a viper carrying incurable poison; it is unbearable inebriation; it is a terrible fall that never touches the bottom. (6). No instruction, no rule, no politeness, no goodness—nothing is remembered by creatures when they are over-powered by it. (7).

Ah, the mental fate of these thoughtless creatures who have no taste for the good path! Drunk with the wine of unchecked pleasure-seeking, they are only carried along the wrong path. (8). They are dragged into a despicable hell, bristling with unbearable eddies of misery, by their own senses which are panting for enjoyments of a trivial order and which are in league with sinful inclinations. (9). For instance, those who are enslaved by their tongue and gorge themselves with viands at night cannot get sound sleep. How will they discharge the noble duties of life, which alone could confer happiness hereafter? (10).

Those travellers moving along the path of worldly pleasures have thus in their hands the effects of their own good and bad deeds as the food for the journey; but when the journey is finished, there is nothing left over to take them to a higher state. (11). But men of wisdom who possess an established character discriminate good from bad—they do not hanker after forbidden fruits because the delight they bestow are partly and hollow. (12).

Brahmacharya—absolute chastity and spiritual discipline—is the one means of attaining Parabrahman or Supreme Divinity; those who practise it are worshipped by those whom men adore. Brahmacharya is the vital support of character. (13). All glory to such heroic souls who harbour no fear whatever about birth and death, who are up in arms against those potent unspiritual forces of the world approaching to engulf them and who have completely subdued Kama (cupid) reigning supreme in the face of beauty. (14).

Into their ears the wedding music produced by Vina and flute accompanied by the dalliances of creeper-like damsels dancing sportively and the encouraging words of encircling friends will not enter, simply because no room is given for such an occasion; neither will the accusatory words "Ah my child!" etc., uttered by the bride at the time of deep sorrow and pain,—words helplessly choked at the throat and followed by tears. (15). Those pure souls shining in their meritorious deeds are anxious to acquire excellent virtues. They never covet riches or enjoyment, but engage themselves in spiritual discipline. Their main concern and delight is to subdue passions and banish lust. (16).

They alone deserve our salutation—who having rejected like a straw the prospect of a wife anxious to join a newly wedded bridegroom, wondrous riches and succession of youthful enjoyments, girdle themselves to save the life of others impelled by an onrush of mercy, and who lay down their own bodies in the most guileless dedication. (17).

—*Avadanakalpalata.*  
(Verse 13 is Hemachandra's)

## SPIRITUAL REGENERATION OF INDIA

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

*A beautiful large edifice, the glorious relic of hoary antiquity, has, out of neglect or disuse, fallen into a dilapidated condition; accumulations of dirt and dust may be lying everywhere within it; maybe some portions are tumbling down to the ground. What will you do to it? Will you take in hand the necessary cleansing and repairs and thus restore the old, or will you pull the whole edifice down and seek to build another in its place, after a sordid modern plan whose permanence has yet to be established?*

*When a man has begun to be ashamed of his ancestors, the end has come. Here am I, one of the least of the Hindu race, yet proud of my race, proud of my ancestors. I am proud to call myself a Hindu. I am proud that I am one of your worthy servants. I am proud that I am a countryman of yours, you the descendants of the sages, you the descendants of the most glorious Rishis the world ever saw. Therefore have faith in yourselves, be proud of your ancestors instead of being ashamed of them. And do not imitate; do not imitate! Whenever you are under the thumb of others, you lose your own independence. If you are working, even in spiritual things, at the dictation of others, slowly you lose all faculty even of thought. Bring out through your own exertion what you have, but do not imitate. Yet take what is good from others.*

*If a man goes towards what is false, it is because he cannot get what is true. Do this, and let him compare. You give him the truth and there your work is done. Let him compare in his own mind with what he has already in him; and, mark my words, if you have really given him the truth, the false must vanish, light must dispel darkness and truth will bring the good out. This is the way you want to reform the country spiritually; this is the way, and not fighting, not even telling people that what they are doing is bad. Put the good before them, see how eagerly they take it, see how the Divine that never dies, that is always living in the human, comes up awakened and stretches out its hands for all that is good, and all that is glorious.*

*I grant that we have to take a great many things from other nations, that we have to learn many lessons from outside; but I am sorry to say that most of our modern reform-movements have been inconsiderate imitations of Western means and methods of work, and that surely will not do for India. That there are evils in our society even a child can see, and in what society are there not evils? Denunciation is not at all the way to do good. As I look back upon the history of my country, I do not find in the whole world another country which has done quite so much for the improvement of the human mind. Therefore I have no word of condemnation for my nation. I tell them "You have done well; only try to do better." Great things have been done in the past in this land, and there is both time and room for greater things to be done yet. I only ask you to work to realise more and more the Vedantic ideal of the solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature.*

*Talking is not religion; parrots may talk, machines may talk. But show me the life of renunciation, of spirituality, of all-suffering, of love infinite. This kind of life indicates a spiritual man. This is one of our greatest duties, and you will find that the more you work to help others, the more you help yourselves. The one vital duty incumbent on you if you really love your religion, if you really love your country, is that you must struggle hard to be up and doing, with this one great idea of bringing out the treasures from your closed books, and deliver them over to their rightful heirs. Aye, for ages together we have been saturated with awful jealousy; we are always getting jealous of each other. Why has this man a little precedence, and not I? Even in the worship of God we want precedence, to such a state of slavery have we come. This is to be avoided.*

*May He who is the Creator the Preserver and the Protector of our race, the God of our forefathers, whether called by the name of Vishnu, or Shiva, or Shakti, or Ganapati, whether He is worshipped as Saguna or Nirguna, whether He is worshipped as Personal or Impersonal, may He whom our forefathers knew and addressed by the*

words "That which exists is one; sages call Him by various names"—may He enter into us with His mighty love, may He shower His blessings on us, may He make us understand each other, may He make us work for each other with real love, with intense love for truth, and may not the least desire for our own personal fame, our own personal prestige, our own personal advantage, enter into this great work of the spiritual regeneration of India! (—Selections).

## THE NATIONAL IDEAL

### I

A GLANCE at the history of the world reveals that there has been mingling of races and people all through the ages rendering impossible the creation of perpetual barriers between the various divisions of humanity. If modern science has demonstrated anything so beneficially, if the closeness which mankind enjoys as a result of the entrance of steam and electricity into mechanical motion has emphasised anything, it is that the world may be united into a single group. But internationalism, liberalism and other high-sounding words have not yet received any practical content. Perhaps the world is yet unripe for a universal outlook, and therefore nationalism has to be recognised as a necessary evil at this stage of human development. For, unless a vigorous nationalism supports the aspirations of a people, stability for society and government cannot be achieved. Moreover, when vigorous, aggressive nationalism is the order of the day, if a particular nation fails, on whatever account it might be, to evolve a strong national spirit, its very existence becomes precarious.

Therefore nationalism as an ideal is a convenience which is not prejudicial to a liberal outlook, if it is not deliberately abused. As patriotism, which

is the active expression of this same spirit, is nothing but a readiness to engage oneself in the welfare of a particular country and not the whole humanity, so nationalism too is something like a half-way house between tribalism and liberalism of the broadest kind. It is not necessary that such a sentiment should necessarily be contradictory to a broader outlook, notwithstanding the fact that the behaviour of the nations of the world today makes such a claim incredible. We shall try to show in this number that the genuine Indian solution of the problem will go a good way in clearing up this difficulty. It will be evident, as we proceed, that the conception of a national ideal which India has evolved has not only power enough to vitalise her social being but also to contribute to the future development of a world ideal without any prejudice to the constituent groups.

### II

Europe witnessed the dim beginnings of nationalism at the dissolution of the semi-barbarous empire of Charlemagne. But the sentiment crystallised into recognisable form only towards the nineteenth century and onwards, when history became fervidly active through politics, and the need for arousing the group con-

sciousness either for prosecuting aggressive foreign policy or for promoting internal welfare by building a more compact, frictionless administrative system became an imperative need. But even now it is impossible to define precisely what nationalism is or what a nation practically means, though we take an accumulation of people who think they should be designated as one people to be a nation. For example, Italy did not think that it was one people until long after the Italian unity was an accomplished fact. It is difficult to say to what measure Scotsmen would agree when we subsume them under a British nationality. Evidently, community of language or race does not make up a nation. If a common literature is accepted as the criterion, we see no reason why the United States of America and Great Britain or Argentine Republic and Spain should stand as separate nations. Even religion in the conventional sense does not make up a nation; England has scores of it and India, a clear half-dozen.

The truth is forcefully pointed out by Mr. H. G. Wells when he says: "All men are by nature partisans and patriots, but the national tribalism of men in the nineteenth century was unnaturally exaggerated; it was fretted and over-stimulated and inflamed and forced into the nationalist mould. Nationalism was taught in schools, emphasised by newspapers, practised and mocked and sung into men. It became a monstrous cant which darkened all human affairs.... It greatly helped diplomats to carry on their game of Great Powers, to carry politics in that form to the doubting general intelligence." When national self-realisation is put forward as the

only objective of polities, the State could no more tolerate any other organ of action or expression against it; in fact the State then comes to be regarded as the ultimate moral being. Infinite economic expansion becomes its motive power; the political destiny then becomes wedded to imperialistic aspirations, to the utter disregard of spiritual values. Exploitation, expansion, war and conquest become the links in the chain of 'national progress.'

### III

When nationalism of the above type, with its cruel and costly programme, has ascendance in most of the countries, whatever its external garb might be, a nation like India lagging behind in effecting an inner unity—not on account of a truly universal and philosophical outlook gained by the individuals, but because of strong disintegrating causes—is sure to be reduced to weaker and weaker position. It is imperative that India, too, has to weld herself into a strong united nation to march abreast of other countries. For the last several decades this has been engaging the attention of us as a people, with appreciable amount of success.

Naturally the question may arise here: Does India also require nationalism 'in order that it should behave collectively as if its needs, desires and vanities were beyond comparison, more important than the general welfare of humanity'? There will not be any room left for such a doubt when we study the ideal which India has been developing towards self-realisation for millenniums. But if anyone is enthusiastic to see Indian nationalism made a replica of the Western models,

it will be an impossibility to herself and a sad loss to the world."

What is the national ideal for India which is not a contagion but an internal growth? Looking to the past, we will have to admit frankly that India never had so much of a community of will as she had a community of obedience, even in her palmiest days, directed to the sacerdotal ideals or a royal head at the top of a loosely built administrative system. But there has been throughout the history of this subcontinent the seed of a spiritual unity, which knit together not only people within her boundaries but even attracted foreigners hovering beyond her boundary into this unity, and which still has immense potency to weld the whole world into a spiritual whole. If this particular force has not been dynamic or fruitful in regenerating her own political and economic condition, it is only because no effort has been made to bring the high ideal among the common masses through proper education. Therefore we were warned by one of the greatest sons of the land forty years ago to flood the whole land with spiritual ideas before social and political ideas take root. Our tardiness to achieve it has made the political and social uplift such uphill work today.

#### IV

No nation can rise without enthusiastically coming under a great and powerful ideal. That ideal for India is her spirituality and philosophy. It is a fact of history and psychology that those who train themselves to live in the least and control themselves well will in the long run score victory. Those who run after luxury, however vigorous they may appear

for the present, will have to degenerate, decay and disappear. Babylon and Egypt, Greece and Rome, have given us lessons in this truth; while China and India linger on with a cultural background of scores of centuries to illustrate the contrary. What the world requires is a harmony and not a promiscuous amalgamation, or a residual unity attained by the elimination of the weak. That would lead only to brutality and self-annihilation. Nor is it a law that all people should enter the race for the same cup—either commercial primacy or political aggression. So the patient, long-suffering Hindu race ordered its society on the basis of spirituality long ago. While other nations look for a utopian golden age ahead, the Indian, the real child of the Bharatavarsha, has a picture of a *Ramarajya* or *Kritayuga* in his mind to which he wishes to get back things every day.

India is fated by Divine Providence to play the spiritual note in the harmony of nations. In spite of the onslaught of materialism India lives still, because she holds on to God and to the treasure-house of religion and spirituality. Religion alone can, therefore, form the bed-rock, foundation, backbone and life-centre of Indian national life. If the vitality of India as a nation is at a low ebb *today*, it is more because of the senseless imitation of some of the degenerate models of Western thought and activity than the inherent defects of the social life here. It is no wonder we fail in our activities when we neglect our part and discard our individuality—which does not consist in our national dress or food alone but many many times more in the mental

make up. We are then put to shame in the comity of nations. It is because the Indian mind is derailed from this particular groove that India finds it hard to hold her own. Is it possible to succeed if we are to wipe off the old programme that has been tried for long long ages and that has sunk into the core of our being, and write over the national mind a new programme? With what shall we replace the vitality India has concentrated in religion? No amount of political or social manipulations can remedy the evils of life unless they are vitalised by spiritual force. The evils of materialism cannot be neutralised by materialism. When armies attempt to conquer armies they only make brutes of men. So spirituality alone can conquer and destroy the evils of the world.

#### V

When it is asserted that religion and spirituality alone are to be made the fulcrum of human uplift and our nation's ideal, a very clear definition of what is meant by such terms is required. In plain words, we are to understand by these much misused and misunderstood words the universal religion of head and heart--the life-bestowing principles. They have nothing to do with the superstitions which we have been hugging for several centuries. We have to keenly discriminate them and eliminate them without any regret. It is hard to find better expressions to convey this than what has been employed by Swami Vivekananda: "I would rather see every one of you rank atheists than superstitious fools, for the atheist is alive and you can make something out of him. But if superstition enters, the brain is gone, the brain is soft-

ing, degradation has seized upon the life.....Brave, bold men--these are what we want. What we want is vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles and nerves of steel, not softening nainby-pamby ideas.....There is no mystery in religion.....Mystery-mongering and superstition are always signs of weakness, degradation and death....Every principle of religion is safe, and the sooner these black spots are purged away, the better the principle will shine, the more gloriously."

Where are we to search for these ominipresent, universal virtues which are so successfully made a mockery of by ephemeral local customs and prejudices which men have enthroned in their august place? We have to find them in the strong divine words of the Scripture, the Upanishads. In these age-old rocks are embedded pure gold that could be minted into coinage that can gain currency for all time and in all countries and purchase the highest spiritual values. Of course it does not mean that philologists and antiquarians who delve into them or traditionalists who repeat the successive syllables are going to regenerate India or illumine humanity. Those few grand and animating spiritual truths buried under the debris of the past, when they are brought to light, emphasised in the proper way and sent into the life current of humanity, are sure to have revolutionising influence for good. That is no easy task and no great end is cheaply got. Let us note a couple or two of these ancient truths.

#### VI

First in order comes the truth discovered and emphasised in the Vedas: "Existence is one: Conceptions of It

are various and multifarious." This is in harmony with the spirit and aspirations of modern scientific investigation and valuation. Moreover this and this alone can supply the background for social, national and international morality, and toleration and sympathy, the very life of universal harmony. This alone can solve the discord and differences in the realms of social and religious activities. The most fruitful idea of Ishtam, or one's own ideal and method in religious worship, is the direct outcome of this truth; and when this tenet is actively practised, Islam, Christianity or any other religion of India cannot be a stumbling block to India's unity. The Hindu can perfectly be sure that adherents of other religions also worship the same God under different conceptions, and when they too are led to sympathise with the Hindu attitude through active love, religion will cease to be a dividing factor.

Institutions, societies and organizations are useless unless the elements of love, sympathy and care for all enter into human relations as active factors. An idea of spiritual oneness alone can inspire these qualities. Regeneration of humanity is entirely dependent upon the practical application and effective operation of the implications of this spiritual oneness. If socialistic and liberal ideas have a wide appeal, it is only because they have a tinge of unity, though distorted and imperfect it be. But why should we drink ditch water when the perennial stream ceaselessly flow under our very eyes? The evolution of India's spiritual culture is only a repeated emphasis on this central theme of unity in massive language with tremendous power.

The next idea which the world owes to the Upanishads is that this spiritual Unity is a matter of direct realisation, because man at core is in identity with It. This conception of the Atman is the grandest fact emphasised by religion in India. No other conception of man could apprise us of the grand truth that we are in immediate connection with an infinite mine of power, purity, knowledge and blessing which awaits only to be elicited. We have only to feel intensely, actively, sincerely and in a practical way, and we are at once made noble and strong. This spiritual solidarity of man is a constant fact, and the blackest Negro and the vilest outcast require only proper stimulation to bring to play all those excellences buried in them. The sameness and omnipresence of the Atman is the talisman to inspire, elevate and unite India—nay the whole world. Other materialistic conceptions, however scientific or logical they may appear to superficial minds, can never inspire that faith in oneself and in the Divine, the highest good. Our children can be taught to become strong mentally, spiritually and even physically, and given the power to stand on their own legs boldly, all-conquering and all-suffering, as soon as this idea of the glory of the Soul is brought home to them. Fire and enthusiasm are sure to come to the blood by this understanding. The Hindu alone as a nation has that special aptitude to see things from an introspective viewpoint, from the subjective relation. That is why he can be calm in the face of misery, strong at the hour of trial, ready to sacrifice and renounce.

## VII

There are again ideas such as the eternal march of beings, the law of Karma, the notion of freedom as against the idea of salvation, the doctrine of Power, theories of moral life according to conditions and stations of life in society which are necessary and satisfying even today as they were long, long ago, and which centre round the main theme of Reality, supplying a unitary ideal for the introspective nation. The ideal described above is certainly not assimilated and practised widely in our own country. But unless they are clearly understood and firmly believed in, no one can have faith in his own capacities and possibilities. The whole nation is to be leavened with this spiritual leaven; the destiny of the nation can then be gloriously worked out through the new consciousness of strength awakened by this knowledge.

The eternal religion is one; that is the perception of the Divine within. Of all the ideas in the world, this alone can give an infinite, ennobling and expansive view of man, and based upon it, thought and conduct can receive value, meaning and driving force. The national idea for India has been built upon this; because the individual is glorified and invested with infinite power and wisdom to expand through love and co-operation into successive ideals of nation, country, humanity and the whole of existence. Until the very final step of expansion is achieved he is no more free; and individual freedom becomes conditioned upon universal love learnt in the school of love for one's own country. Such a conception of nationalism has none of the evils which the western conception of totalitarianism or any other type of nationalism brings in its train.

## TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DEVOTEE

[The birthday anniversary of the Holy Mother falls on the 1st of January 1940. The following article, which forms a section from a forthcoming book on the Holy Mother, strings together some of her essential teachings.—The Editors.]

In her teachings the Holy Mother pre-supposed all the important doctrines of the Vedanta, but she never entered into the subtleties of metaphysics or the theoretical exposition of any particular philosophical doctrine. She admitted that in the fullness of one's spiritual evolution one reached a state in which all manifested phenomena was realised as illusory and even the idea of God was transcended. "In course of time," she once

said, "one does not feel even the existence of God. After attaining wisdom one sees that Gods and Deities are all Maya. Everything comes into existence in time and also disappears in time.....God and such things really disappear."

While thus admitting the truth of the non-dualistic goal, she never compromised on the absolute supremacy of the path of devotion in all spiritual striving. Thus when a disciple once

spoke to her complacently about the ultimate unreality of God, creation and the rest, she said in reply, " Narendra once said to me, ' Mother, the knowledge that explains away the lotus feet of the Guru is nothing but ignorance. What is the validity of knowledge if it proves that the Guru is naught?' Give up this dry discussion, this hodge-podge of philosophy. Who has been able to know God by reasoning? Even sages like Suka, Vyasa and Siva are at most like big ants trying to carry away a few grains of sugar from a large heap."

Thus the path of devotion formed the principal subject of her teaching. She always impressed on aspirants the need of looking upon God as one's 'own' and of surrendering oneself unconditionally to Him. For spiritual illumination ultimately depended on His grace alone, and all spiritual practices, which men generally performed for attaining Him, were at best contributory factors, being helpful only in the purification of the mind. For this reason she often spoke of God as possessing the nature of a child. A child might not give a thing to a person even though he asks for it a hundred times, whereas it might give it away to another at the very first request. In the same way the grace of God was not conditioned by anything.

She did not, however, mean thereby to minimise the importance of self-effort. " Everything, no doubt, happened only by the will of God," she used to say, " yet man must work, because God expresses His will through the actions of man. Again all the facilities that one gets in life are determined by one's past actions, and besides one could cancel one's past actions by one's present actions."

What she sought to impress on devotees was that they should neither over-estimate nor under-estimate the value of spiritual practices. It was wrong if one thought that just as goods can be purchased from the market for a price, God could be attained by the power of one's spiritual practices like Japa and meditation. For ultimately it was the result of divine grace alone. If, however, there was any condition in grace, it was pure devotion. So she said, " Neither Mantra nor scripture is of any avail. Pure loving devotion alone obtains everything."

But this kind of devotion, according to her, was the most difficult of all things to attain; for it could not be had so long as there was the slightest trace of worldly desire in the mind. Only Iswarakotis (the ever-free) possessed it in abundance, and others attained to it to the extent they freed themselves from all worldly desires. For this reason, she once said that God might give salvation to any one, but He seldom conferred devotion on men.

The use of spiritual practices, according to her, consisted in giving this purity of mind so necessary for the dawn of devotion. They cut asunder the ties of past Karma and helped to subdue the power of the senses. As the wind scattered the clouds, the Name of God destroyed worldliness. And, again, just as by handling flowers or pieces of sandalwood one's palms got the fragrance of those objects, so divine contemplation helped one to mould one's mind in His image.

Hence while maintaining the importance of grace she always insisted on the value of spiritual practice

regularly and patiently undergone. "Don't relax practice," she used to say, "because you do not get His vision. Does an angler catch a big carp everyday the moment he sits with the rod. He has to wait and wait and many a time he is disappointed."

She seemed to have attached special importance to spiritual experiences that came as a result of strenuous practice. "God realisation," she said, "can be had at any time by the grace of God, but there is a difference between it and what comes in the fullness of time, as between mangoes that ripen in the proper season and those that ripen in the month of Jaishtha. The latter are not very sweet." She also insisted that the normal course of spiritual progress was gradual. Perhaps one practised Japa and austerities in one life; in the next life one's spiritual mood increased thereby and, in the life following, still more and so on.

Among spiritual disciplines, she stressed most on the importance of Japa. According to her, initiation with the Mantra purified the body. God, she said, had given the fingers in order that they may be blessed by making Japa with them. An athlete was in the habit of carrying a calf in his arms from its very birth. He did it every day and as a consequence he gradually developed the strength necessary to carry it without effort even after it had become a full-grown animal. Just like that, she used to say, was the nature of spiritual progress one made, gradually and unobserved, through the practice of Japa. By continuously making Japa thousands of times, one's mind automatically

got steadied and absorbed in meditation. When a pure mind made Japa, the holy word bubbled itself up spontaneously from within without any effort on one's part to repeat it. One who reached this state attained success in Japa.

Along with the practice of Japa and meditation, she advocated the importance of spiritual aspirants engaging themselves in healthy altruistic works. For men ordinarily could not do spiritual practices for all the twenty-four hours of the day, and work performed with a spiritual motive was therefore the best thing to fill up the gap. Without that there was even positive danger; for an idle mind was proverbially the devil's workshop. So she favoured the type of altruistic activities undertaken by the monks of the Ramakrishna Order.

She always advised spiritual aspirants to be patient in times of difficulties and troubles. For misery, she said, is the symbol of God's compassion. In place of getting worried, an aspirant should pray to the Divine with tears in his eyes when he wanted illumination or found himself faced with doubts and difficulties. Whether householder or Sannyasin, she impressed on all aspirants the need of being continent—if they were really serious about spiritual life. For to have non-attachment for the body and its pleasures was the *sine-qua-non* of spiritual life. Today the human body is, tomorrow it is not; and even its short span of life is beset with pain and misery. Discriminating thus, one should cultivate the spirit of dispassion and renunciation, and then the true love of God would dawn in one's mind. She put all her ideas on spiritual life in a clinching form when

she said, "He who is able to renounce all for His sake is a living God. Even the injunctions of destiny are cancelled if one took refuge in God. Destiny strikes off with her own hand what she has written about such a

person. What does one obtain by realising God! Does he develop two horns? No. He gains discrimination between the real and the unreal, gets spiritual consciousness, and goes beyond life and death."

## OUR PSYCHIC CULTURE

BY Dr. B. BHATTA CHARYYA, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. B. Bhattacharyya, the Director of Oriental Institute, Baroda, is a well-known authority on Tantricism. He has discovered, published and interpreted valuable works belonging to this school and earned the gratitude of the scholar world. In the following paragraphs he maintains that this aspect of Hinduism has conserved important psychic values widely and faithfully pursued in past centuries.—The Editors.]

BROADLY speaking, there are two kinds of culture, one material and the other psychic. One relates to the development of our material resources, while the other concerns itself with the development of the psychic resources. Just as there are exercises for the body, so there are psychic exercises for the mind. The present article deals with this latter subject.

India undoubtedly is just the country which is most suitable for the cultivation of those systems that conduce to the psychic development of man.

India is the only country which never believed in one-sided material development leaving aside the psychic sphere of human life. Never in the history of India we find material culture predominating over the psychic. Kings and ministers are extolled because of their strict adherence to Dharma. A king's life is supposed to be an eternal sacrifice on the altar of Dharma. The social and political laws are based on Dharma, and are a part and parcel of the Dharma Shastra.

India is the country which gave birth to the three great religious sys-

tems of the world, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. This is the country in which the Hindus alone developed the six systems of philosophy, along with a host of others belonging to Buddhism and Jainism.

Numberless temples and monasteries beautify this glorious land of our forefathers, and render the atmosphere holy. Every one in this country is aware of the great principles of sin and merit, and the population almost universally believes in a world beyond death.

Under these and many other favourable circumstances, this country was long considered to be the best place where a system of psychic culture could be developed. In the most ancient literature we meet with descriptions of saints and hermits leading a life solely devoted to meditation, penance and austerities for the development of what may be called soul-force. Persons belonging to the Fourth Order of Sannyasins devoted their life to the realisation of the eternal Brahman. Monks in Buddhism and Jainism are even now to be found who have renounced the world in

order to reach a world which is beyond human vision, and practising all kinds of rigorous austerities.

The ancient seers could discover early that in the world of matter and spirit, the latter always predominated over the former, and therefore required much greater attention than is realised in modern days. They always advocated that it is of the utmost advantage to mankind that it should develop its psychic resources as much as the material.

It was universally believed that whatever was possible by developing the material resources, the very same thing was attainable by developing the resources of the mind. If we can transmit a telegram over the wires, the Yogi is able to communicate the same through thought power. If we can visualise a distant scene by television, the Yogi is able to show the same by his psychic power.

At least, that has been the general belief not only amongst the general public but also amongst scholars and authors of the huge mass of literature collectively known as the Tantras which advocate innumerable psychic exercises of the most subtle kind for the attainment of super-normal powers.

The Tantras as a class of literature have been all along despised by respectable scholars, on the ground that they contain nothing but unmeaning and revolting practices. To them, this literature is useless rubbish as it has nothing good to teach. The Tantras are bad because they advocate practices that go against accepted ideas of morality, and talk of things which have no scientific value.

The abuses bestowed upon this great literature in the past cannot

for a moment be justified. It is true that it cannot give us assistance now when we are striving for material welfare. The Tantras may be considered useless because they are not able to bring money. They are of no value because the present atmosphere of money-hunting is most unsuitable for practising psychic exercises.

But in one sense the Tantras are unique. No literature in the world can provide us with a system of psychic exercises such as are contained in the Tantras and allied literature. The Tantras show how a person can be an adept in psychic exercises and gain mystic experiences of the most wonderful kind and attain mystic powers of all varieties as he progresses in the path of God realisation through intense meditation practised for a long time and through a variety of circumstances. In the Tantras the greatest stress is laid in the latent divine power in man by the cultivation of which the individual can come face to face with his Maker.

That being so, the knowledge embodied in this literature is altogether useless for all practical purposes in modern times when we have the least need for it. Under the stress and strain of modern civilisation, where have we the time or leisure to think of our Maker? We have our offices, profession and business for the purpose of making money. Then we have our engagements, parties, dinners, dances, meetings, associations, clubs, travellings and changes for diversion. As the Tantras do not provide us with knowledge relating to these modern activities, they should be regarded as useless. There is hardly any controversy on this point. What we really deplore is that in modern times we

have also lost that finer sentiment of human mind, called 'appreciation'. In fact, we have become so dull that we can rarely appreciate the efforts made by our ancients to impart full development of mental and psychic faculties, according to a plan hardly conceived by human mind anywhere in the world.

Material culture and development has its day; it has achieved wonders, and has been a great success. It has intoxicated the world—nations and countries are satiated by its very success. But the ways of the mind are mysterious. It now hankers after something else; it wants something that will bring peace and calm. It wants food for the soul. It is now tired of material development, it now wants psychic development. Once the attention of the world is focussed on the psychic side of life, it will then discover what a wonderful heritage our forefathers left for us in the Tantric works for marshalling our psychic forces in all stations of life.

Before concluding this short article, I should like to indicate one of the principal features of the contents of the Tantras. As has already been pointed out, the contents of this literature mostly relate to psychic or mystic subjects. They are full of extraordinary psychic exercises designed to develop mental power. In order to prescribe exercises suitable for individuals or communities, the originators had to examine the mystic value of all conceivable objects found in existence, and ascertain their proper place in the programme of psychic exercises.

In the case of the Tantras the originators are reputed to be the great Lord Siva and his beautiful consort

Parvati, who also figure as interlocutors. They examine the mystic value of all things. For instance, the letters of the alphabet are first needed by a Mantra Yigin. Therefore, each letter is separately examined, its mystic value is determined, its proper place in the rites is fixed. The kinds of Siddhis each letter is capable of giving are also stated and the deities that preside over each are named and their forms are given.

The combinations of letters in the alphabet produce the more complicated Mantras, and thus the Tantras are led to show the characteristics of the different combinations and give elaborate directions for their repetition in order to obtain different results. The deity is nothing but the embodiment of the Mantra and, therefore, there is a special section on the worship of the different deities.

The rosary is another thing required in the muttering of Mantras. All varieties of material with which a rosary can be made are examined and their mystic values are determined. What particular rosary is harmonious or otherwise in particular forms of worship is minutely stated. The rosary can be made of Rudraksha, glass beads, crystals, conch shells, corals, diamonds, emeralds, rubies, bones and various other things. All these have their meanings, values and uses. The Tantras declare that certain rosaries may be most suitable for the worship of Siva, but the same thing will be harmful in Sakti worship. Certain things can be used for Tara but not for Kali or Sundari. Certain rosaries have power to grant Siddhi within a week, others may take a fortnight, or a month, or even a year.

In the muttering of Mantras there should be a proper time. In order to find out the auspicious time the Tantras examine the properties of the different hours in a day, the Tithis, Nakshatras, months, seasons and the years. These times are examined with reference to special deities and rites, and their mystic values are determined.

In repeating Mantras, seats made of certain materials are considered to be important. The Tantras examine the mystic value of the different seats made of different stuffs like cotton, wool, wood, metal or skins. The seats acquire different values as they are placed on conveyances or on different animals. They also state the Siddhis obtainable by employing different seats.

Among the many seats employed for the purpose of psychic exercise, the seat of a corpse on the burning ground has been given special importance in the Tantras. There is a series of austerities connected with a corpse and they are collectively known as the Sava Sadhanas. According to the Tantras this special seat is the most suitable for rousing the Kundalini power rather quickly when the Sadhana is practised under gruesome and frightful environments. The Tantras are therefore led to examine the mystic value of the corpses of different kinds, of men, women, children, untouchables, and of persons killed under a variety of circumstances. Persons killed by weapons have one kind of magical value, those killed by poison have another kind, by epidemics a third, by the order of the king a fourth, and so on.

For the purpose of muttering the Mantras a suitable place is necessary,

and in order to find places of approved suitability, the Tantras examine the mystic properties of all the important places in India and determine their efficacy in dealing with the different Mantras and their deities. The places thus approved are even today known as the Siddha Pithas or places where muttering of Mantras leads to the acquisition of supernormal powers.

Oblations of *ghœ* in fire is an important process in the Tantras. The fire is fed by different kinds of wood and thus the mystic properties of the different trees furnishing fuel are examined and fixed. It may be remarked while passing that the oblation of *ghœ* forms part of the Mantra Bhaishajya or healing by charms, and the different leaves and branches were employed against a variety of specific diseases.

It is easy to multiply instances like these, but it is not necessary. The above represents only one aspect of the Tantric literature. The powers determined by the Tantras cannot be tested by scientific methods. When science is able to test the truth of the findings of the Tantras, there no longer will exist a difference between the material and psychic sciences. The Tantras always insist on one thing, namely, to rouse the inner soul-force, technically known as the Kundalini power, which makes the process of God-realisation possible through intense meditation carried on under diverse circumstances and conditions.

It will certainly benefit humanity if the attention of competent scholars is diverted to this fascinating branch of human culture.

## THE PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS OF VEDANTA MOVEMENT IN FRANCE

BY MARCEL SAUTON

[Mon. Sauton is closely associated with the work of the Ramakrishna-Vedanta Society in Paris. He gives herein an account of Swami Siddheswarananda's activities in Paris for the past two years, together with an analysis of the appeal that Vedanta and the personality of Sri Ramakrishna make to the French mind. It was written just at the time of the great mobilisation in France, and the references to the prospect of war must therefore be read with this in mind.—The Editors.]

At this very period, two years ago, we—my wife and I—were in this same small village of Verneuil, in the same house. Our vacation had come to an end and we were preparing to return to Paris. A letter had reached us, informing that a Swami of the Order of Ramakrishna would be in France towards the close of July, and requesting whether we could reserve a room for him for some months. Needless to say that our reply was posted the same day, and we hastened to return to Paris to put our house in perfect order.

It was on the first of August 1937 that we had the first visit of Swami Siddheswarananda, accompanied by Mon. J. Herbert, Mrs. and Mr. Eliot and Swami Yatiswarananda whose speech we had already heard at Sorbonne on the occasion of the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami had just arrived in Europe; he seemed fatigued by his voyage. He was tall and slender. We were surprised that the Math had entrusted such a task to a Swami so young. Our surprise only increased when we learnt afterwards the actual age of the Swami.

Soon after, the Swami, with two valises, established himself in our house, in a room where for many

years we had not received any one and where we used to meditate at night before retiring for sleep.

By what miracle could a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order come from far-off India and establish himself under our roof? Why in our house rather than in the house of any other person? This is the question we have often put to ourselves and which still comes to us. I shall try to find an explanation.

After the war, my commercial business had taken me beyond France. An offer with some prospects came to me from the Far East, and I embarked for Bombay in December 1929. I was already interested in India, so captivating and mysterious, and my short sojourn in the big Indian cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon increased my interest all the more. Leaving India I continued my voyage through Penang, Singapore, Java, Sumatra and Siam, and I reached Indo-China. It was at Saigon that on a rainy day, a day of depression, I entered a book-shop for buying some books. The title of a book *La Vie de Ramakrishna*.—*The life of Ramakrishna*—invited my attention, and the name of the author Romain Rolland, many of whose works I had already read, made me buy the book. I com-

menced to read that very evening seated in my room and I bought afterwards *La Vie de Vivekananda*, *The life of Vivekananda*. The study of these books brought about a profound change in me. I bought other books to instruct me further on this new world which had been revealed to me and it was thus that, among others, I discovered the *Bhagavad Gita*. I returned to Europe in August 1930. The commercial business which I had sought to advance had not, in spite of all the energy I had brought to bear, succeeded; but I had got a glimpse of the spiritual life from the experiences of my travel.

On my return to France, I shared my discoveries with my wife. She said to me one day, "You had gone to the Far East for business. You did not get what you wanted; but you have brought from your voyage things infinitely more precious."

Later we came into touch with the spiritual centre known as the Friends of Buddhism directed by Mme. Lounsberry with great ability. It was there that we first got hints for practising meditation. Later we took part in the celebration of the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna and joined the group called the Friends of Ramakrishna directed by Swami Yatiswarananda. This will explain why we were asked to receive the new Swami who came for work in Paris.

Now the Swami has been with us for more than two years. To start with, his difficulties, especially with regard to language, were very great. At night, when I was at home, I tried to speak English with him. My wife knew not a word of English, but I found to my surprise that the Swami who knew not a word of French

understood her admirably. His progress, however, was very quick. In two months a pocket dictionary was deprived of its binding, and its pages became thumbed and crumbled. Gradually he began to speak in our language.

Many visitors began to call. Letters poured in plenty. Who had informed these people of the arrival of the Swami in Paris? Every day, new persons came to our home which was so deserted before. One fine Saturday morning, in May 1938, at the request of the first group of students, the Swami met an audience of fifteen. It was the first talk and was given in English. An obliging lady translated as the Swami spoke.

The Swami was invited to Versailles to give talks at the house of Mme. Mallet. Twice every month he holds there a conversation in English. Mme. Lounsberry requested him to conduct a class in meditation every week at the Rue de Seine in the quarters of the Society of the Friends of Buddhism.

The meetings held at our residence became more and more frequent. We were forced to borrow seats from neighbours; but that was not sufficient since the apartment was small. Many had to sit on the floor; others stood on the door-way. But one Sunday, our landlord who lived in the neighbourhood told us that we had received on the previous day thirty-four persons, that he had counted it himself, and that we should put an end to all these visits which disturbed his peace.

We were greatly embarrassed because rent is very high in Paris. A few days after, we were, however, relieved of our difficulty, as we were offered at

a reasonable rent a much larger place in the suburb of Paris at St. Mandé, a healthy and quiet quarter. It is just a few steps from the woods of Vincennes. The Society, which had already been named as the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, was shifted to the new house in February, 1939. We had now at our disposal a large hall for meditation and ample convenience for receiving a larger number of persons.

The Swami held two meditation classes every week, namely, on Wednesday afternoon and on Sunday before dinner. He received numerous visitors. The telephone never ceased to ring. On the first Saturdays of every month, except from the end of June to the beginning of October, he gave a talk in a place we had found at Passy. It was an academy of music, and no one except the Swami had been allowed to speak there. The public who attended these lectures remained faithful. There was actually a group of one hundred persons who regularly followed the course. Taking account of the sick and those unavoidably absent, there was a constant group of about 50 persons. All these speeches were rendered into French and, week after week, a resume of the previous day's speech was distributed gratis. The teaching of the Swami was on the *Bhagavat Gita*, which was quite suited to the European with spiritual inclination.

Besides these regular courses, the Swami spoke on numerous other occasions in the Society of the Friends of Buddhism; in a theosophical circle of "Juventu" or aspirants; at the hall of the Vie Spirituelle or Spiritual Life, a group of liberal Protestants directed by Madame Louise Compain; and at

the meetings organised by Mme. Guynesse, the sister-in-law of M. Romain Rolland, who has established a society called 'Friends of Gandhi'. He has also delivered a very beautiful lecture at the Hall of Geography "La Seille de Geographie," Boulevard St.-Germain, on the Mission of Ramakrishna in Europe, in a meeting organised by Mme. Compain where a Protestant pastor and a Rabbi, each in his turn, developed the theme of spiritual unity in all religions.

We have also to add that in our new place at St. Mandé, we have been able to worthily celebrate the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. Professor Masson-Oursel, Mon. Mario Meunier, the great Hellenist, Mon. Jean Bruno of the Bibliothèque, the National Library, Mme. Louise Morin, who is well-known in India for her hospitality to all the Hindus who pass through Paris or who live there,—all of these spoke in turn, after the discourse opened by the Swami who read a paper in French in a very clear voice. A gathering of more than one hundred persons had gathered to hear the speakers.

From all parts of France, letters of persons seeking spiritual help pour in every day. It is surprising how they have learnt of the existence of the centre at Paris. Invitations to the Swami are received from numerous towns in France and Belgium, and the Swami, single-handed, cannot meet all these demands.

This is the path traversed in the short period of two years. The Swami is progressing every day in his study of French. At the commencement of each meditation class, the Swami deals with an appropriate spiritual subject in our language. Two months later,

our translator Mme. Duche informed us that she would not be able to be present at the meeting at Passy. Till that time she had willingly taken on herself the work of translating the lectures of the Swami. For an accurate translation of the Swami's teaching, great culture, wide knowledge, correct understanding of the Hindu philosophy and a mastery of the English language were necessary. Mme. Duche had all these qualifications and it was due to her inexhaustible kindness that the beautiful lectures of the Swami were not lost to the majority of us who did not know English. That day the Swami, deprived of his usual translator, made a great effort and before an audience of more than forty persons, delivered for the first time, a public lecture in French. It was very nice and the students departed in radiant joy in the evening on account of the perspective which had been opened to them. We knew that day that all our hopes would be justified when the Swami could in a regular manner come into direct contact with his audience and express in French with as much certainty and eloquence as in English.

The group we had framed in France had no organisation; it was a friendly group which was not bound by any obligation. We enlisted none but those who were quite willing. There were representatives of all faiths, of all professions, of all ages and of all political opinions. To be a member of the Ramakrishna-Vedanta Centre, it was sufficient to express the desire to the Swami and approach him with a desire for spiritual things.

The time has now come to think as to what will be the future of the Vedanta Centre in France. This is

not the place to speak of the great work already accomplished in Switzerland by the Swamis Yatiswarananda and Siddheswarananda. M. Jean Herbert has had occasion to furnish a very comprehensive report on this subject. France requires much greater attention and it is certain that a single Swami cannot, without injuring his health, minister to the needs of such a large country. There is in our country (France) a current of mysticism testified to by our whole history. If superficial currents prevailed at certain epochs, there have been many reasons. The Catholic Church, when it was powerful, tried to substitute its organisation for the Roman organisation. Thus it became more a political force and often made use of religion as a means to gain domination. For attaining its end it has not hesitated to overthrow heresy and destroy all attempts at emancipation. The institution has become more and more rigorous in its dogmas and has slowly turned over the true teachings of Jesus. Though it has preserved the forms of worship, it has dried up the sap of Christianity. Instead of seeking to free people from ignorance, superstition and fear, it has seen in all these but a means to maintain its own power. Thus it has engaged itself in a conflict with science in proportion as the human spirit, in attempting to liberate itself from all tutelage, has struggled to attain to the truth. Lastly it has not been sufficiently scrupulous in the recruitment of its clergy; it has sacrificed quality to number and has forgotten that a religion is of no value except by the living example of those who preach in its name. Who knows that the greater part of the evils from

which Europe is now suffering is not due to the attitude adopted by the Church for centuries?

There is now in Europe a great number of persons who have been frustrated by the feverishness imposed on them by their civilisation and feel that they have been deceived by the life of the senses. They have sought in vain to satisfy their internal thirst by intellectual or scientific culture. The tragic events which unroll themselves now oblige each being to question himself on his destiny, on the place he occupies in the world. Every one has to give a meaning, a significance to his life, and the totalitarian conceptions which menace Europe today have brought about the logical counterpart, the development of the sense of individuality.

Our Indian friends will pardon us for entering into this short analysis. It has been necessary to show those who live so far from us that we should not judge people from appearance. There is in France, as there has been always, a considerable number who hanker after the spiritual life. Many of them will come sooner or later to ask of the Swami for special advice. History bears witness to the great spiritual movements which have always arisen at the time of a great tension. Now there is the Vedanta Centre. It is living and is in good vigour; it has manifested itself already in a tangible fashion; a nucleus of good wishes has already been formed around the Swami. The day when the Swami could express himself in French—and that is very near—that day the spiritual movement which has been brought into existence by his presence will develop rapidly.

The French mind which practically inclines to analysis and reflection will have little difficulty in assimilating the Vedantic teachings. The intellectual education of the average Frenchman is based on scientific culture and the development of logic and reason. Now, the Vedanta has an immense advantage. It does not propose one and the same ideal to all; and it does not impose one and the same method to attain the Truth. It appeals to psychological knowledge, the taste for which has already been strong among us, and France is surprised to see that the recent discoveries of Psycho-analysis have been understood and utilised in India from time immemorial for practical ends—for the conquest of the inferior self. Vedanta proposes a metaphysical explanation of the universe which does not at all go against the conclusions arrived at by science. France has found that Physics and Chemistry are struggling to find a unity in and through all the innumerable manifestations of Nature. It is habituated to consider the universe as a manifestation of one Cosmic Energy. By reading *L'Homme, Cet Inconnu* (Man the Unknown) of the great Frenchman, Dr. M. A. Carrel, we have learnt that the goal of science is to explain the complicated visible by the simple invisible. The conception of the Antaryamin is rapidly becoming familiar to those who have heard of 'the standpoint of Sirius' which the astronomers, and after them the philosophers, have adopted to contemplate our actions objectively without mingling ourselves with passion and emotions.

I may add that France has found in the Vedanta a religion which not only authorises a person to make use

of his intelligence, but also recommends the application of it to the utmost extent. No field is forbidden, no reading is prohibited, and there are no mysterious dogmas; scientific minds can, therefore, accept the spiritual life, because there is no more discord between faith and science. This explains the reason why our group includes a great number of doctors, among whom may be cited the names of Dr. Grangier and Dr. Winter, who are very fervent Advaitins.

Vedanta also brings to the door of every one the practice of meditation which has remained in France the exclusive possession of some monks or a few religious people cloistered in convents or monasteries. One of our friends, M. Bruno, who works at the Bibliotheque Nationale, was astonished that such a vast subject had never been fully dealt with in Europe except in some mystic works. The only available book at present is that of Mme. Lounsberry, recently published. Meditation not only allows each individual to analyse and form his true character but also develops in him a taste for independence and liberty.

For the above reasons, Vedanta forms the best system to supply all intellectual and spiritual needs of the French. We are convinced that the propagation of Vedantic ideas will be the occasion of a veritable Renaissance for the French mind.

The Swami presents to us the Hindu culture in the purest form, in its universal aspect. We have understood that Europe had been for centuries taking a false route in bringing to impose the truth by force and fear, and it is now reaping what it has sown. If in our days the West is pervaded by an atmosphere of menace

and hatred, it is precisely because it has never known toleration from the political or the religious standpoint. In spite of all the brilliance of our material civilization, we remain the children of the great 'white barbarians,' as the ancient Greeks and Romans called the Gauls and the Germans. Our organisation is based on force, the use of might and authority. This is a weak point in our culture, and Vedanta progressively brings us the appropriate remedy.

The orthodox teaching of the Swami, which is based on the explanation of the Hindu scriptures, the texts of Sankara and the developments made by Sri Ramakrishna and the Swami Vivekananda, is appreciated at its true worth. The Swami does not seek to lay stress on the exotic side of the Hindu culture, as is done by the greater part of the philosophers and the writers who are interested in the East. He tries to make us understand the profoundity of the human soul and its needs above the appearances through forms and names. He unveils the eternally youthful face of India, in the course of his conversations.

Further, he does not seek to make converts. He does not ask us to negate our past and our culture. He does not attempt to break us away from our source. He recommends us above all to respect the beliefs of our brothers and to enlarge our own so that we may be able to integrate them with those of our neighbours. We can then remain in our own position. We can preserve our special ideal. Whether we be Catholics, Protestants, Jews or atheists, we are brothers. We shall attempt every day to heighten more and more the level of our

perception. A day will come when our intellectual point of view will translate itself naturally into the spiritual plane.

The great teaching which attracts the larger number of listeners is supplemented by the special instruction given by the Swami to a more limited circle, which includes those who have already come into contact with the teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda through the books of M. Romain Rolland and Mukherjee. The Swami tells us often about the incidents and the episodes in the life of the Master. Though many of us had been educated in the Catholic religion, we had not known up to now the life and teachings of Jesus. It was Ramakrishna who has made us understand Christ. Also a person whose life is lost in the dim light of history, whose words have been very often tampered with and whose actions have been misinterpreted, cannot have much influence. The Gospels which have come down to us were written long after the death of Christ. They have been subjected to corrections and interpolations in the course of centuries and modified by translations and the wishes of the people.....The life of Ramakrishna is a recent fact. His witness is modern. They do not throw us in doubt. His whole life was lived in broad day-light, in a house where one could enter at any hour of the day. There is no mystery; no gap between the day of his birth and death—nothing in his life is unknown. There is no doubt that this ideal man, who succeeded, as Professor Masson-Oursel has often remarked, in the attempt to realise the same ideal by practising all the great known reli-

gions, will soon become popular in France.

Beneath his hostile appearance the Frenchman is a little cold and cautious in spite of his very vivid inclination for intellectualism; he is one in whom sentiment predominates. And the example, the ideal, of Ramakrishna, will exercise a profound attraction for him when all the incidents of his life and teachings become well-known. More often we—my wife and myself—have found that in lending booklets and brochures for spreading around us the Hindu teachings, that which appeals most to the heart of the Frenchman is the *Words of the Master*, the small book translated by Mme. Honagger. The words of Ramakrishna echo in the hearts of all those who read it, since Ramakrishna, by the examples taken from daily experience, has brought to the door of even the ignorant the most difficult metaphysical themes.

But the Swami has been careful to oppose all attempts at absorption, of which he has been the object. There is at present in France a great number of spiritual, occult, metaphysical and similar circles frequented by men who are attracted by powers of all sorts. Some of them have attempted to approach him on account of personal curiosity or for some selfish ends; all he has avoided with a gracious smile.

The ideal of traditional Vedanta, and particularly the cult of Ramakrishna, necessitate a severe and intransigent moral culture; it is on this discipline that the Swami insists on every occasion.

We cannot measure the actual results of the work solely by the number of persons who follow the course; number does not count. Quite

recently, some one has truly remarked of the 'active minorities.' Long before, did not Vivekananda charge himself to transform the world with a dozen youths devoted to the spiritual life to the very core of their hearts.

If we contemplate the difficulties the Swami had to encounter on his arrival, without support or connections, in a country the language of which was quite unknown to him, and where no one had been prepared to receive him, and if we also take into account the fact that he knew nothing except through intuition of our customs and manners so different from those of India—we cannot but be struck by observing what he has already achieved in two years.

Jesus has said, "If two persons meet in my name, I shall be with them." Will not Sri Ramakrishna also be with those who are ready to sacrifice everything for him and unite together?

The problem resolves itself into this: If there be no war (this was written just on the eve of mobilisation in France), the philosophy of Vedanta and the ideal of Ramakrishna will spread more and more in this country and many Vedanta centres will be spreading in the different cities of France. If war were to break out, those who have already received the Vedantic teaching will be conscious of being the chosen representatives of

a new ideal of fraternity and unity. Whatever may happen, they will remain faithful to the ideal, recalling that one cannot act on another except by example. They will remember that they should allow spiritual influence to fulfill one's Svadharma and accept without refusing what the Prarabdha presents before one.

The soil of France is a fertile field which attracts the admiration of those who visit the country. Its inhabitants are through ages cultivators or children of peasants, hereditary farmers of Sri Ramakrishna's parable, who will not be 'discouraged by many successive bad harvests.' The seeds sown in good soil will grow, and we will continue to work in the hope that good harvest will come, even if we do not live to see it.

All the disciples of the Swami feel profound gratitude to the Math at Belur, which has deprived itself of the services of a personality like him for the sake of our country. Gifts of this kind, far from impoverishing, only enrich those who have been so generous. They associate, in their gratitude, the name of Miss Macleod who has exercised much influence in the choice of the Swami who has come to preach the blessed teaching in this country, which was regarded by the great Swami Vivekananda as the centre of European Culture.

## DO WE KNOW SRI RAMAKRISHNA?

BY RAMAKRISHNAN, M.A., L.T.,

[Literature cannot hold the candle to Godmen. They are hardly understood by their contemporaries; much less by the posterity. Blessed are the precious few who approach their level of consciousness, who alone could *know* them, though not fully. —The Editors.]

THERE was a generation that was contemporary with, and physically near to, Sri Ramakrishna. We of to-day consider that generation extremely lucky. There was a later generation which was contemporary with the direct disciples of the great Master. We regard this generation too as fortunate; for every one of the direct disciples represented one or more phases of Sri Ramakrishna's multiple personality, and those who belonged to this generation could form a picture of the Paramahansa by moving closely with his first children. We of this day belong to a still later generation; for all the well-known direct disciples have now passed away.

Can we of to-day then say that we know Sri Ramakrishna? The answer to this question is both affirmative and negative. We know and yet know not Sri Ramakrishna.

Who can deny that the Paramahansa is well-known to us? Almost every home contains his picture, almost every schoolboy knows his name, almost everyone is pretty familiar with the main details of his life. Even those who do not know the incidents of his career are familiar with the work that the Ramakrishna Missio. is doing. Sri Ramakrishna Birth Centenary celebrations a couple of years back have served to carry his name and his message to the

remotest corners of the land. Not only in India which is the land of his birth, but even in far-off lands, this saint, who spent the major part of his life within the four walls of a room in a temple near Calcutta, is adored and eagerly sought after.

And yet we do not know him. "Yes, my friends, the world has yet to know that man," said Swami Vivekananda, and what Swamiji said is true even to-day.

Suppose we, young men of to-day, want to know Sri Ramakrishna. What should we do? We must first turn to the books on him. There is the authoritative *Life* published by the Ramakrishna Math. It is the best introduction to the Master, so far as the Master can be understood through literature. It is a simple, plain, sane, unbogged and at the same time very inspiring biography, and Mahatma Gandhi's short preface to it does full justice to the greatness of the subject of the biography. Then there is the book of Romain Rolland on Sri Ramakrishna, wherein in a kindred spirit of the West has portrayed the Master in an inimitable manner. Much about the Master can be known from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna by M. Then there are numerous booklets and magazines which throw light on the Master, not to mention the members of the Order of Ramakrishna

who of course are the living interpreters of the Master's mission. Granting that one avails oneself fully of all these sources of knowledge, one can still not say, "I know Ramakrishna."

It is said that words often hide more than they reveal of the thought they are intended to express. So, too, does the biography of a great man keep back more than it gives out. As the authors of Sri Ramakrishna's biography point out: "Great as are the difficulties of faithfully delineating the life-history of any famous personage, they are almost insurmountable when the subject of the biography happens to be such a striking figure as Sri Ramakrishna." How can even a few hundreds of pages of printed matter give us a full account of a man whose every moment of existence was an epoch in itself, who lived in the short span of half a century the entire national life of centuries-old India, whose small physical personality was the exterior to a mine of experiences of Himalayan significance to humanity, who, sitting in his small room, shaped the history of a sub-continent and fashioned the future of mankind? Can ever words succeed in even faintly portraying the depth of Sri Ramakrishna's passion for God-realisation, or the unique comprehensiveness of his spiritual achievement? The words of his biography are therefore mere pointers, they just indicate, they only sketch in broad outline.

M's *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, for instance, is an admirable book. It makes the Master live before us as it were. But all the same one should not, after a study of the Gospel, go away with the idea that one has learnt all that should be known of Sri Rama-

krishna. And this for two reasons. M.'s Gospel is the record of only a few days of Sri Ramakrishna's life on earth, when M. happened to meet the Master in person. Who knows what wonderful conversations took place on days when M. did not happen to stay with the Master? There is no record of such days, and their number must be legion? Secondly, Sri Ramakrishna had the unique faculty of changing his speech and adjusting his teaching in accordance with the temperament, development and fitness of the individual he was talking to. And so what he said to M. or in M.'s presence should not be regarded as containing all his ideas on all things.

Similarly we read, in Sri Ramakrishna's Life, of many persons, both men and women, who came to him and were blessed by him. But the list of such persons cannot claim to be exhaustive. Many who are now unknown to us must have come to the Master, and no record of them has been kept.

And then even in regard to those friends and disciples of the Master of whom we have record we must remember that each one of them understood and appreciated the Master in his or her own light and according to his or her own capacity. The appraisement of Sri Ramakrishna was therefore varied. "It is a noteworthy fact that no man has been the subject of so many conflicting estimates as the Prophet of Dakshineswar. His personality was a combination of so many apparently contradictory elements that it is baffling to the superficial observer; that is the reason why he has been so variously described as a maniac, a good soul, a devotee, a

saint, a man of the highest realisation, and an Incarnation of the Most High .....yet no one by words and actions satisfied so many as he."

That it was difficult even for those who moved with him closely to understand Sri Ramakrishna completely, will be evident from the following happenings. The Bhairavi Brahmani who guided the Master in his practice of Tantrika Sadhana and who was the first to proclaim his divinity must surely have had a deep insight into Sri Ramakrishna's nature. And yet we are surprised to find that when after successfully going through the Tantrika Sadhana, the Master wanted to practise Advaita, she actually tried to dissuade him. "She could not bear to see Sri Ramakrishna associate with any other devotee or teacher. She did not take kindly to the idea of Sri Ramakrishna's doing his duty by his wife." Of course later on she perceived her mistakes, and pursued her search for truth. But it is interesting to find such an advanced spiritual person as the Bhairavi Brahmani failing to understand Sri Ramakrishna in entirety.

Let us take the case of Totapuri, the mighty lion of realisation, who initiated Sri Ramakrishna into the path of Advaita. Great as his spiritual advance was, Totapuri lacked completeness as he was supremely ignorant of the terrible power of Maya, and he could not at first understand Sri Ramakrishna's worship of the Mother. Later an experience occurred which taught him what Maya was. Sri Ramakrishna had thus characteristic in him which even his Gurus could not understand at first, and the Master always helped to illumine the one or two dark corners in the hearts

of his preceptors. If a complete understanding of Sri Ramakrishna required, even in the case of such gifted souls as the Bhairavi Brahmani and Totapuri, some substantial effort and the enlightenment of some strange experience, how can we, ordinary men and women, claim to know him fully?

Another instance we hear of is how not all those who were gifted to be physically near Sri Ramakrishna could understand him aright. The family priest of Mathur Nath, a man named Chandra Haldar, was wild with Sri Ramakrishna, because he regarded the Master as an unwelcome competitor in the field of his monopolising the rich Mathur's favour, and one day when the Master was alone in a state of absorption, he kicked the Master thrice. Well, such a varied mass is this humanity! There were those who worshipped the body of Sri Ramakrishna (we may point out for instance to the case of Srinivas, a low-caste Hindu of Kamarpukur who foresaw the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna even when Sri Ramakrishna was a boy, and worshipped him with garland and sweets), and there was at least one who kicked that body. It has been the curse of mankind that prophets should always be molested by priests!

It is indeed hard to understand the Master in his all-comprehensive multiplicity, and here is yet another instance. When Swami Vivekananda wanted to start the Ramakrishna Mission and yoke the monastic life to the regeneration of the land and to the active service of suffering humanity, many disciples of Sri Ramakrishna wondered if such a course was in tune with the mission of a man who was always rapt in God-

consciousness and who was a past master in renunciation and detachment. Was not, they thought, this world Maya from whom aspirants after perfection must fly? Swami Vivekananda alone could really comprehended the significance of the Master's advent in its fulness. Swami Yogananda, for instance, told Swami Vivekananda, "Yes, whatever you will, shall be fulfilled; and are we not all ever obedient to you? Now and then I do clearly see how Sri Ramakrishna is getting all these things done through you. And yet, to speak plainly, some misgiving rises at intervals, for as we saw it, his way (i.e., Sri Ramakrishna's) of doing things was different. So I question myself! Are we sure that we are not going astray from Sri Ramakrishna's teachings?—and so I take the opposing attitude and warn you." And Swami Vivekananda answered, "You see, the fact is that Sri Ramakrishna is not exactly what the ordinary followers have comprehended him to be. He had infinite moods and phases. Even if you might form an idea of the limits of *Brahma-jnana*, the knowledge of the Absolute, you could not do the same with the unfathomable depths of his mind!"

No one could have understood Sri Ramakrishna better than his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda, and below are extracted the words of the Swami about his great Master:

"What comparison can there be between him (Sri Ramakrishna) and ordinary men? He practised in his life all the different ideals of religion to show that each of them leads but to the One Truth. Shall you or I ever be able to do all that he has done? None of us had understood

him fully. So I do not venture to speak about him anywhere and everywhere. He only knows what he himself really was; his frame was only a human one, but everything else about him was entirely different from that of others.

"But take it from me, never did come to this earth such an all-perfect man as Sri Ramakrishna!

"Judge him not through me. I am only a weak instrument. Let not his character be judged by seeing me. It was so great that if I or any other of his disciples spent hundreds of lives, we could not do justice to a millionth part of what he really was.

"According to one's own capacity, one has understood Sri Ramakrishna and so is discussing about him. It is not bad either to do so. But if any of his devotees has concluded that what he has understood of him is the only truth, then he is an object of pity....What he (Sri Ramakrishna) was, the concentrated embodiment of how many Avatars—we could not understand a bit even spending the whole life in religious austerity. Therefore one has to speak about him with caution and restraint. As are one's capacities, to that extent has he filled him with ideas. One spray from the full ocean of his spirituality, if realised, will make gods of men. Such a synthesis of universal ideas you will not find in the history of the world again....He himself is his own parallel. Has he any exemplar?"

In the language of the scriptures in reference to the Absolute, may we now conclude by saying that he who thinks he knows Ramakrishna in all his glory knows him not?

## A HIGHER VIEW OF YOGA

BY PAUL BRUNTON, Ph.D.

[The following is Dr. Brunton's reply to the criticism of his book published in the November issue of *The Vedanta Kesari*. With the kind permission of Dr. Brunton, we give some foot-notes to clarify our viewpoint.—The Editors.]

The November issue of *The Vedanta Kesari* contained a leading article which castigated my recent book, *The Inner Reality*. Ordinarily I never reply publicly to such criticisms; for during the years when among other activities, I was Literary Editor of a London Journal and myself wrote dozens of book reviews I came to realise that the majority of sensible people are quite competent to evaluate a book for themselves and usually read reviews for sheer curiosity, and not for practical guidance; whilst others are guided solely by personal taste and temperament.

—A. The editor begins by warning Hindu religious aspirants not to accept<sup>1</sup> my statements about 'God as Light.' He asserts that I have misunderstood the Hindu scriptures<sup>2</sup> which speak of God as Light

only symbolically, and he denies that the Light sometimes seen by mystics in meditation can have any connection with the

energy, sun and God are synonymous. Our scriptures teach us to view meditatively mind, sun, ether, Om, etc., as the Supreme Being, and not to regard them as identical in a physical sense. *Vide* Brahma Sutras: IV: 1, 4 & 5, and Sankara's commentary thereon. Sankara also suggests in his comment on Ch. Up. III: 13, 7, that Brahman,—the Light which shines above heaven—appears *as if* it shines (*iva*).

The Atman-Brahman Reality—which we have in mind when we use the term 'God'—is the Pure Principle of Experience or Consciousness which makes all knowledge possible. It is, therefore, Svayam-Jyoti, Svayam-Prabha (Self-luminous, Self-illuminating or Self-manifest). It is the Unchanging Ether in which all changing experiences occur. It is neither subject nor object, but illumination itself, which is its own content. The objective phenomenon of light cannot be this Unrelated Reality, on which no category can be fastened. See Mandukya VII.

Katha, II: i, 8, calls this Reality Agni, fire. And Manu, XII: 123 corroborates it. There are also hundreds of Rig-Vedic hymns on Agni, esoterically interpreted as God. Since luminosity, purity and pervasiveness of Consciousness are shared by ordinary light, it has been deemed the suitable symbol of it. The Upanishads, as Dr. Brunton cites below, speak of the Atman as Jyoti, Bhava, Sukra, Divya, Tejas, etc.,—effulgence, brilliance, light etc. But it is in apposition to or identical with Chit or Consciousness (Cf. *Asti Bhati Priyam*, and *Sat-Chit-Ananda*). Sankara, therefore, makes such compounds as Chaitanya-Atma-Jyoti, Chaitanya-Jyoti (*Vide* Kena I) Sarvasara Up. too has, "What shines in the heart is Consciousness." Nri. Up. VI,

<sup>1</sup>Our words: "must accept only after scrutiny."

<sup>2</sup>Our contention is that it is unwarranted "to confuse the photic experiences of mystics with the light experimented by physicists." Study of non-quantitative properties is not strictly the function of physics. Writes J. W. N. Sullivan, "Radiant energy is, in its very nature, atomic. This conclusion applies to all forms of radiant energy, heat, light," etc. *Outlines of Modern Knowledge*, p. 94. It does not matter whether we think of the atom as a particle or as a mathematical symbol. The light seen by Yogis is a mental phenomenon. Neither physics nor psychology has been able to establish experimentally its radio-active nature. We have not denied, as Dr. Brunton suggests, the belief that "the Supreme Being manifests materially as well as symbolically through the medium of light. According to Hindu scriptures—we mean the Advaitic reading of it—all that exists is the Supreme Being in reality. So light too is He. This is not the same as saying that radiant

Light ordinarily known. Let me reply by entering into the genesis within my own head of this doctrine. I was first initiated into the *belief* that the universe was made out of Light-energy, that the Supreme Being manifests materially as well as symbolically through that medium, by an Indian Yogi. This happened several years ago and afterwards I did occasionally see a vision of enveloping light during the deeper phases of meditation. This stirred my interest and I then investigated the history and incidence of this belief both in the East and the West, and discovered that many mystics had reported similar visions. I found too that almost all ancient religions—as the holy man had taught me—prescribed sun-worship in some form or other. Furthermore, phrases like the following turned up in the texts of the Hindu sacred works which I read from time to time:

*Rig Veda* I. 50/10: "Then they see within themselves the ever-present light of the old seed of the world, the highest; perceiving above the darkness of ignorance<sup>3</sup> the higher light in the sun as the higher light within the heart, the bright source of light and life among the gods, we have reached the highest light."<sup>4</sup>

*Katha Upanishad*. 5.15: "This whole world is illumined with His light."

has, "Being-Consciousness-Bliss is Light." *Bri. Up.* IV: iii, 6 has, "By the Self alone as light man sits." *Gita XIII: 33*; *Varaha Up.* III: 11 and *Mahavakya Up.* make the symbolic nature sufficiently clear by taking the sun as a figure. *Gita, XIII: 17*, *Mundaka II: ii, 9* and *Brh. Up.* IV: iv, 16 speak of God as "Light of lights" and Sankara asserts in *Brahma Sutras I: iii, 22* that since it would be absurd to say that one light illuminates another, the second light can only mean Consciousness or Inner Reality. *Rig Veda, X: 129, 3* speaks of the "Darkness hidden in darkness" and mystics, it is well known, have also spoken of God as the "Unborn Darkness." See also Evelyn Underhill: *Mysticism* p. 250, 12th Edition.

The conclusion is therefore inevitable that the Light of Knowledge, which sustains and illuminates Experience and its segment, the universe, is Consciousness, and not radiant energy of physics.

<sup>3</sup> What Light is above the 'darkness of ignorance'?

*Svetasvatara Upanishad* Chap. 3: "This Self is indeed the mighty Lord. He is the imperishable Light that controls everything."

*Prasnopanishad* I: 7, 8: "This is he, the totality of all living beings assuming every form, who rises every day. Shining, omniscient, the highest stay, sole light, life of all creation, this sun rises."

*Chandogya*, 6, 3: Light thought, "Would that I were many! I will create!"

*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms*: "This light shines from within only when all the impurities of the heart have been removed by practice of yoga."

There would appear to be as much right<sup>5</sup> to treat these words as plain statements of fact as to poetize them into mysterious symbols. Finally, when I was informed a couple of years ago by scientific friends that the last word of the latest laboratory investigation spelt matter as light-radiation, I thought that here was modern science confirming ancient Hindu doctrine in a striking manner, and said so in my book. It will be seen from the foregoing that my advocacy of this doctrine was not merely a flight of personal fancy but based on what I have been led to believe sincerely by the editor's own countrymen—both living and dead—was the highest Hindu *religious* conception of God!

<sup>5</sup> It is apparent that there is a difference of opinion in India as to what God is. We must seek and find, therefore, that other and higher path of the highest Advaita hinted<sup>6</sup> at by the ancient Rishis as opening to those who want the truth which is uncontradictable and beyond all possibility of contradiction. And may I add that, having undergone this great widening of view, knowing that such a path exists, such questions whether or not God is Light will

"The right to make plain philological translations of Indian scriptures is amply exercised both by Western savants and Christian missionaries with different motives. But in India there is an established tradition of exegesis, followed by the great Acharyas, based on criteria more valuable than historical and philological. They have not poetised, but expounded such words in the light of their experience and traditional training. For our meaning we have always relied on them.

<sup>6</sup> None could do better.

necessarily receive little attention from me henceforth. In short I am endeavouring to follow the celebrated precept of Swami Vivekananda whom we all venerate, "Arise and stop not until the goal is reached." If the journey entails a change of landscape as one climbs slowly higher, I am not ashamed to admit the fact of change, for Truth must be ever my goal. I had all these visions of unearthly light when I was at those stages and the experiences were correctly described, but I am getting different views of them as I struggle higher. Viewed from their respective standpoints none of my previous books needs to be nor is repudiated, for all were perfectly true records of experience and insight gained at the time. The renowned and revered Sri Ramakrishna also appears to me to have taught this fact of a higher standpoint to his different disciples according to their capacity."

B. The editor refers at great length to my attitude towards asceticism. His criticisms reveal a misunderstanding of what I have said on the subject and why it was said. This can be quickly proved. He asserts that I wrote "running away to monasteries and solitude is useless." What I actually wrote was "It is a mistake to imagine that the spiritual life can be found *only* in monasteries, hermitages, Indian Ashramas or similar places remote from worldly existence." Surely if this means anything at all it means that man can find the spiritual life inside an Ashram, if he prefers such a place, or inside a city, if he wants to remain there. It means that God does not only dwell in Ashramas but also in busy towns, where He is much more needed! The critic goes on to ask: "Why then is he (Paul Brunton) so much in disfavour of monasticism... Buddha and Christ and a host of holy saints were all wrong on this computation." On the contrary, Buddha and Christ and the saints were not at all wrong but rather my critic's method of performing calculation! Let him read my book more carefully and he will find that I am not in disfavour<sup>6</sup> of monasticism: I am in disfavour of the biased and un-

<sup>6</sup> So too has a galaxy of sages down from the times of the Rig Veda done. Cf. Rg. V. I: 164, 46. Mandukya K. II: 20-29.

<sup>7</sup> That this will be the cumulative impression brought about by repeated stress

balanced evaluation of monasticism as being the *sole*<sup>8</sup> path open to man if he wants to lead a higher life. Proof? Here are quotations from the book: "Do not stay for ever in solitude. Keep up a balance, a rhythm with the world. What you will gain and learn in your solitude you must work out in society and activity." Again: "The wise course is to seek a middle course between asceticism, which is so frequently a failure, and hedonism, which is so often a disaster." Still again: "The driving urge which sends men into monasteries needs to be respected, however, for we must all subdue and sanctify the passions and energies, although there are different ways of accomplishing this." However, if I am no longer an enthusiast for asceticism, it is because frequent residence in certain Ashramas of ascetics has completely cured me of my illusions in this matter, whilst it has removed my desire to return to Asram life unless it be of the type led by Shankara and his gurus. I shall always hold in high respect those who are ascetics in thought, and not merely in appearance.

C. He complains that I "lay the axe at the root of morality and therefore of spirituality" by certain statements, against which he warns. He quotes as an example the following words "Nothing that you do with or by the body is going to affect your spiritual state drastically." Taken out of their context such words might seem foolish but read in their place they appear wise, for on the same page it is pointed out that the essential factor in yogic disciplines is the control of thought, on the defects alone of some specimens of asceticism, will be evident by a perusal of the whole chapter on "The Question of Asceticism." "...they are frequently useless" (p. 143). "I am even anti-ascetic" (p. 158). These quotations show that we have not imputed anything unwarranted. However we regret that we had omitted to make reference to the limited concessions shown to monasticism in a very few passages, and especially in the expression "frequently" in "frequently useless" cited above.

<sup>8</sup> No such claim has literally been made. Cf. Sankara, however, in Introduction to Aitere. Up. and Mundaka Up. III: ii, 10. Cf. also Brh. Up. iv, v, 15, Brahma Sutras III, JV: 20, 47 etc.

and that self-mastery is primarily a thing of the mind. Therefore I explain<sup>9</sup> that those who pay *all* their attention to physical regimes such as fasting, sitting in a cave, putting ash on the forehead, or wearing clothes of a special colour, are missing the point and are unconsciously exhibiting the very materialism they are trying to avoid. "The mind is the real battle-ground," I write, "not the body." Is it necessary to remind Indians that the pages of the *Dhammapada* are strewn with similar ideas uttered by Buddha, whom my critic says I have put in the wrong? And need it be added that Christ reiterated similar teaching again and again. "As a man thinketh in heart so is he." He placed the fullest emphasis on the control of mind and he even went to the length of denouncing as hypocrites those who were outwardly faithful in performing religious practices but who were secretly sinning in thought. The *Bhagavad Gita* also says, Chap. III. 6, 7: "He who, restraining the organs of action, sits thinking in his mind of the objects of the senses, self-deluded, he is said to be one of the false conduct." But whoso, restraining the senses by mind, O Arjuna, engages in Karma-Yoga, unattached, with organs of action, he is esteemed." The notion which I try to convey in *The Inner Reality* is essentially the same. We need a sense of proportion. The continued preoccupation with physical disciplines to the extent of regarding them as more important than mental asceticism, is unhealthy. If this doctrine is "laying the axe at the root of morality," as the editor says,<sup>10</sup> then I am quite content to go on advocating immorality.

D. The next criticism is interesting because it is often made against me by

"We are certainly at one with Dr. Brunton in realising the value of a balanced outlook. But in the context, in the expression "Nothing that you do with or by the body" etc., it is not made clear that the author means only "physical regimen such as fasting, sitting in a cave etc," which he mentions now. Apart from this, we were combating the view, held by pseudo-Vedantins, that "those things which are the causes of sin to others," "hot sex" etc., may "even become the cause of uplift to the enlightened aspirant of our own age." The pure teachings of our scriptures are not at all in consonance with this view.

Indian Swamis, but has never been made by any Westerners. Why? Because my books are primarily written for Westerners, whom I know and understand best, and they are intended to be definitely helpful and serviceable. That my object has been achieved explains their lack of complaint on this particular score! *The Vedanta Kesari* accuses me of saying that long meditation is harmful, and that periods of meditation should be "dips" in the midst of activity. The accusation is correct and I am certainly guilty. But am I wrong in giving such advice? For I am addressing my words to men and women who are mostly forced by fate, as 90% of Westerners are forced, to work actively for their livelihood or for their family; I am not writing for Sannyasins who have other and better advisers. I have witnessed the sad results of Western people who have followed Indian yoga methods intended to be practised by those who live in monasteries or caves. Many of those who attempted such practices and devoted long periods to meditation, became insane at the worst, or mildly unbalanced at the least. As a practical man, and not mere theorist, I decided that doing the right thing in the wrong way is equivalent to doing the wrong thing. Therefore I became the advocate of strict moderation and balance in regard to meditation, so far as Westerners are concerned. The results must always be the test of every hypothesis, and I feel satisfied with the results which many of my readers attain.

E. The critic remarks that he cannot find in these pages "the inspirational quality characteristic of the utterances of a saintly personage." Any reader of the *Kesari* who does not know me or has never read the prefaces to my books, will probably jump to the conclusion that I claim (a) to be a saint, and (b) to be a religious teacher. I have never<sup>10</sup> made such claims but, on the contrary, plainly and explicitly

<sup>9</sup> We have only to refer to the passages cited in page 218 of the November issue of *The Vedanta Kesari*. If *The Quest of the Overself* were the book in question we would not have missed these modest statements quoted here. But we are constrained to add that on page 15 of *The Inner Reality* we find, "I now venture to pass upwards to a more exalted platform" etc.

stated in those prefaces that I am neither saint nor teacher, and do not want to be regarded as such. Let others hear those dubious honours; a quieter and less ambitious, if more worldly, existence suffices for me. I wish only to do a little good with my pen, if I may, rather than let it be hired out to the much more lucrative but less satisfying work that is constantly offered me. In *The Quest of the Overself* the following candid words appear: "The laurels of successful advocacy of a spiritual message are as distasteful to me as are the thorns of martyrdom....I continued to refute the term 'spiritual teacher' when it was applied to me. I wished to be known only for what I am--as nothing more than a moral man, with a few abnormal interests, but living a normal life and laying no claims to superiority." It is for *Kesari* readers to decide whether that (and many similar statements in the prefaces of most of my books) disposes of the question.

In conclusion I can only regret that the editor, instead of confining himself purely to criticisms of the subject matter has also seen fit to stoop to personalities<sup>11</sup>. He

<sup>11</sup> We have not made any personal attack on Dr. Brunton. But we admit we have been a bit vehement in our criticism of some of his views, especially of what appears to us as his very slighting estimate of some of India's much respected institutions like monasticism. No self-respecting Indian, especially one who has experienced

has failed to see that the deep desire of my heart is to find in India and carry to the West such truths of thought and life as are desperately needed in that seething cauldron of incredible sin and unparalleled suffering. To that clear aim I have dedicated my pen, but I have done so as neither saint nor teacher; only as a fellow human being who cannot sit idly by whilst his neighbours weep in agony or stumble in the night of ignorance. Time alone can reveal whether I have come to India to exploit her, as my opponents<sup>12</sup> say, or to serve her, as my friends know.

the great value of these institutions, can help making such criticism. Dr. Brunton's manner of presentation may have some value if his views are meant for home consumption. But one cannot tolerate them when they are meant for foreign readers who have little chance of knowing Indian institutions first hand.

<sup>12</sup> We may assure Dr. Brunton that we have been appreciating very much the valuable service he has done to India by his writings, especially by his first book, "Search in Secret India," which, as we know, has made many a mind in the West interested in the spiritual traditions of India. *The Vedanta Kesari* had given a highly appreciative review of that book and published several extracts from it. We only wish that he does not unknowingly counteract the value of that service in any manner.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Gospel of Zoroaster:** By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh. Published by Sri Bhagawat-Dharma Mission House, Harmony House, Rajkot. Price, superior edition Rs. 5, popular edition Rs. 3. Pages 338.

Zoroastrianism is one of the most ancient religions of the world and is intimately connected with India in a twofold sense. In the first place it was produced by a branch of the same Indo-Aryans who composed the Vedas, the source book of Hinduism. As a consequence the Vedas, the scripture of the Hindus, and the Zend Avesta, the scripture of the Zoroastrians, have much

in common between them. In the next place the only remnant of this once widely professed religion is at present to be found in India among the Parsees, who are the descendants of a handful of intrepid emigrants who fled to this country when their original home in Persia was conquered by the Muslims and it became impossible for them to practise their ancestral religion there due to Muslim persecution.

Bhai Manilal C. Parekh, the author of the present book, is not a Zoroastrian by faith, nor is he, as he tells in his Foreword, a specialist in Zoroastrian studies. But he

possesses a qualification that is more essential for the interpretation of a religion, namely, a sympathetic spirit that can enter into the religious experiences of others and select the essential from the non-essential in the presentation of the subject. Besides Mr. Parekh has an extensive knowledge of comparative religion and a fascinating English style which makes everything he touches a thing of beauty.

As such the general reader would find this book much more useful than the production of many a specialist in Iranian studies. The treatment is comprehensive, and covers the whole field of Zoroastrianism—its religious background, the life of its prophet, its scripture, its doctrines, its practices and customs, and its influence on other religions. Few have succeeded, at any rate among non-Zoroastrian writers, as Mr. Parekh has, in giving a vivid presentation of the ethical idealism, the monotheistic fervour, and the social outlook of this ancient faith. A reader will feel convinced that much that is considered noble in semitic faiths like Judaism, Christianity and Islam have their source of inspiration in the teachings of the great Iranian prophet. The chapter on the history of Parsees in India requires especially to be studied in these days both for strengthening the cordial relation between the Hindus and the Parsees, and to demonstrate the generosity of the Hindus to minorities.

**Songs from the Soul:** *By Anilbaran Roy. Published by John M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, W.C. 2, London. Copies can be had of Gita Prachar Karyalaya, 108/11 Manohar Pukur Road, Kalighat, Calcutta. Price Re. 1-4-0. Pages 196.*

This is a book the contents of which fully justify its title. They are the out-

pourings of a devout soul—his offering of contemplation on spiritual themes at the feet of the Divine Mother. They touch upon a variety of subjects, both minor and major, that have bearing on the cultivation of the inner life. There is absolutely no touch of academic stiffness about them, no disquisitions on ponderous philosophical concepts that scare away the lay-mind seeking for enlightenment on the highest verities of life. With their transparent sincerity of purpose, their gentle yet fervent devotional tone, and the musical cadence of the charming prose style in which they are clothed, they elevate one's mind to a high level of thought and convey a feeling of inspiration while imparting a good deal of useful information. All spiritual aspirants who go through them will feel grateful to the author for sharing his very valuable thoughts with them by recording them in the pages of this book.

**The History of Great Light:** *Published by the Shrine of Wisdom, Aakhu, 6 Hermon Hill, London E. 11. Price Re. 1. Pages 36.*

This is the translation of a Chinese text on Taoism by Huai-Nan-Tsze, an authoritative exponent of this religion, who is supposed to have died about 122 B.C. The aim of Taoist teachings is to free man from attachments to all that is transient, thus enabling him both to use and to enjoy all things to the fullest possible extent by assigning them to their proper place in life. While appearing to deprecate the things of this world, Taoism does so only in contrast to the world of reality in comparison with which they are only as shadows to substance, as the reflected beauty of nature to the transcendent beauty of the spiritual world, as the temporal existence of body to the immortal life of the soul.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### The President of the Ramakrishna Mission visits Bombay

His Serene Holiness Sreemati Swami Virajanandaji, President of The Ramakrishna Math & Mission, Belur Math, Calcutta, arrived in Bombay on Saturday the 18th November and was received by the citizens of Bombay under the lead of Mrs. Sophia Wadia, one of the Vice-Presidents of the reception committee, as well as many other magnates of Bombay. The Mayor of Bombay, Mr. B. G. Kher, Ex-Premier, Mr. K. Natarajan, Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. C. Sen, I.C.S., Prof. V. G. Rao and a number of leading citizens including Mr. F. J. Ginwala came to the Ashrama to meet the Swami. The Swami gave a talk in the Ramakrishna Mission Library Hall on the 22nd. The hall was overcrowded and the audience greatly appreciated the most highly entertaining discourse of his reminiscences of the Swami Vivekananda. On invitation from Mr. B. P. and Mrs. Sophia Wadia the Swami attended a tea party held in his honour at their residence where he met the Italian Consul, Mr. R. P. Masani, Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University, Mr. Tyabji, Ex-Judge, High Court, Bombay, Principal J. M. Kumarappa and a number of other distinguished persons.

On the 28th instant the Swami was given a public reception and welcome address (which together with the reply is printed in this issue) at Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall at 6 p.m. His Worshipful the Mayor of Bombay presided. Most of the leading citizens including Mr. B. G. Kher, Ex-Premier, Sir S. S. Patkar, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Mr. S. A. Brelvi, Mrs. Sophia Wadia, Mr. M. V. Indravadan, Chief Presidency Magistrate, Mr. F. J. Ginwala, Mr. G. P. Murdeshwar, Prof. V. G. Rao, Prof. N. K. Bhagwat, Mr. Madhavlal Bhatt, J.P., Mr. G. C. Mitter, O.B.E., Dr. D. L. Sen, Mr. A. K. Sen, as well as leaders of different societies and institutions were present in the meeting. After a short stay in Bombay the Swami has returned to the Headquarters *via* Poona and Nagpur. During his stay in Bombay the Swami, besides giving several interviews, has also been giving spiritual instructions and initiations to many every day.

### The Address of Welcome given by the Citizens of Bombay

To

His Serene Holiness

Shreemati Swami Virajananda Maharaj,  
President, Shri Ramakrishna Math &  
Mission, Belur Math, Calcutta.

Most Revered Swamiji,

We, the citizens of Bombay, respectfully accord you most hearty welcome amidst us and to this great city of Bombay. Inspired by the life and teachings of Bhagawan Shree Ramakrishna, you renounced the world at a tender age and had the privilege of living and moving amongst the first disciples of the Master, Shree Ramakrishna. Indeed, you were one of the most fortunate few to be initiated by the great and illustrious Swami Vivekananda who founded the Order of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the Order whose hallowed farflung name carries to every corner of the globe, its message of the universal truth embedded in every great religion, of the Divinity of Man and of the greatness of selfless service to humanity irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Your presence in our midst is to us the visible embodiment of the great and noble work done by your Order for humanity, suffering under its burden of sorrows, groping for light in the midst of darkness and racked with discontent with a life unsatisfied and unfulfilled. Blessed, therefore, is that Order, and thrice blessed are they who belong to it and have set up a new standard of life and given a new meaning thereto. We welcome you in the name of the diverse communities, cultures and interests represented by the citizens of this great city, the Gateway of India.

We recall with great pleasure how from very humble beginnings the Math and Mission centre at Bombay has grown within the space of the last 15 years to its present magnitude of usefulness, ministering to the various wants of the people of the locality, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. The Charitable Dispensary by free distribution of medicines to the poor and helpless; the Library with its wealth of volumes and a number of monthlies, weeklies and dailies; the Students' Home with its clean, spiritual atmosphere supplementing modern University education;

the Math' which has been a living source of solace to spiritual aspirants of all sects, and, above all, the Swamis, whose dedicated lives and whose public lectures and classes have been providing unfailing inspiration and enlightenment to all classes of Society, have been rendering inestimable services to hundreds of people every day. We also recall with profound gratitude the relief work done by the Mission in Gujarat in 1927 and in Sind in 1930 when immense areas suffered from the floods of Sabarmati and the Indus and when thousands of houses were swept away, and countless men, women and children had to flee for their lives, homeless and helpless, pursued by pestilence, poverty and death. This is an inadequate description of some features of the humanitarian work done in this Province. How is it possible to give an appropriate description of the immense work that is being carried on by your Mission throughout this country from its various centres numbering over a hundred? A contemplation of that great and inspiring work suggests the immensity of renunciation, love and spiritual strength that provide the motive power for all the Mission's undertakings and efforts.

Revered Swamiji, your life has been a harmonious blend of contemplation and action. Unseen by human eyes, many a time you sat and meditated in the serene solitudes of Himalayan forests; yet when the voice of action called, you engaged yourself in various activities of the organization, taking charge of the Mayavati Ashram, editing the "Prabuddha Bharat," publishing most of the volumes of the works of Swami Vivekananda, bringing out an exhaustive Life of your Master, opening a centre at Shyamalatala in the Himalayas and, lastly assuming important offices at the Head quarters, as the Secretary and later, as the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Magnificent, also, has been your contribution to the literature relating to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the form of books which are deservedly popular in both the hemispheres. In short, you have been an indefatigable worker of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for nearly half a century. Your purity, your steadfastness of purpose and the spirit of service which animates all your acts have always proved to be a blessing and an inspiration to all spiritual

aspirants who have come in contact with you; and we have no doubt that it is for these and other outstanding qualities that you have been chosen the Leader of your Order.

We live today under tragic circumstances which recall those that prevailed on the ancient battle-field of Kurukshetra. Once more we witness a gigantic war in which greed and hatred and lust for power, naked and unashamed, seek to establish their domination over the body and soul of mankind; in which their weapons are violence, destruction and horror; in which humanity begins to doubt the meaning of all religions, the dignity of the common man and the greatness of the soul; in which man denies his own divinity; and truth, good-will, brotherhood and peace appear to have become merest mockeries. Life is fast becoming a hideous nightmare, and long-suffering humanity cries out for deliverance. Who will bring that deliverance? Whence and when will it come? When it is sought in all earnestness, deliverance is bound to make its appearance on earth. We believe that when the voice of deliverance comes, it will be one with the voice of your great Order; and we hope that at this critical hour that Order will play a great and noble role and send its clarion call to the harassed heart and the befogged mind of humanity, releasing them from the bondage of fear and suffering of doubts and illusions.

With fifty years of your gifted experience through penance in the Himalayas and association with your great Mission as an active worker in various capacities, may you guide all the centres of that Mission and your brother-monks to hold up the torch of Truth before erring humanity, and light for them the path to a New Order of life, based on the most solid and the most ancient of foundations, the Soul of Man.

May the Almighty God grant you a long lease of life so that you may be inspired more and more to set up objectively before the world, with the aid of your great organization, an ideal which will at once liberate and enlighten, cleanse and fortify, nourish and unify. It is our earnest prayer that your spiritual ministration may prosper more and more and restore India once more to the pinnacle of spirituality, so that its lustre may illumine

the face of humanity with abiding joy and the serene consciousness of fulfilment.

We remain,  
Bombay, Revered Swamiji,  
28th Nov. '39. Yours most reverentially,  
The Citizens of Bombay.

*The following is the text of the Swami's reply:—*

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be in your midst to acknowledge the most cordial welcome which you have accorded to me. I am fully conscious that the honour which you have thus shown me is due not to myself individually but to the Order and the Mission to which I have the proud privilege to belong: the Order which derives its inspiration from the living experiences of countless sages, seekers and seers, from the most long-lived of all cultures and, in particular, from the profound realizations of Bhagwan Shree Ramakrishna and the far-reaching visions of Swami Vivekananda; and the Mission which has successfully organised, fructified and harnessed for public good the longing for service and the spiritual thirst that is inborn in the soul of every man and woman. Allow me first of all to thank you most heartily in the sacred name of that Order and that Mission, and to express my sincere gratification at the representative character of this gathering. Such a gathering is a true index of the inherent catholicity of the Indian mind, of which the highest and noblest efflorescence was the realization of our Master Bhagwan Shree Ramakrishna. The very number of faiths and sects that have made their home in this country has been rendered possible by the spirit of toleration that has animated this motherland of ours from the ancient times. Toleration is no negative virtue: it has its roots in a spirit of catholic appreciation of all that is good in other religions and persuasions; and I say that this spirit, one of the main features of Shree Ramakrishna's teachings, is a fundamental and distinguishing feature of the Indian civilization in which the Hindu and the Moslem, the Christian and the Parsi, the Buddhist and the Jain equally participate.

I come before you not as the leader of a movement or organisation for your uplift or reformation: the aim of our Mission has always rather been to kindle and to keep lighted the flame which is already

in being in the hearts of all of you; to concentrate in visible works and institutions your spiritual aspirations and yearnings, and to seek in your company the fulfilment of those aspirations and the answer to those yearnings. It has been well said in our Scripture,— "As all living beings are sustained by the air, so all the Varnashramas are sustained by the householders." There is no doubt that the Ashram at Khar has grown marvellously and has shown remarkable vitality since its inception a few years ago. It has received unstinted support and devotion from one and all of you, and it is among you that its work and fulfilment has lain, and its promises will achieve realization. Therefore for our Ashram at Khar, I can claim no exclusive credit or merit for my Order or Mission, but all credit and praise therefore is due to the public of Bombay who have so nobly responded to our call, nay, the clarion call of the great Swami Vivekananda, and sustained and strengthened us in our efforts at establishing and maintaining an Ashram near this great city of Bombay.

Many of you will probably recall the utterance of Swami Vivekananda, "The salvation of the world depends on the regeneration of India." It is to achieve this vision that he instituted the Order of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The vitality of the work undertaken by that organisation has already sufficiently demonstrated that his vision was no idle dream. The physical evidence of this fact consists of the schools, both academic and vocational, students' homes, orphanages, libraries, reading-rooms, charitable dispensaries and hospitals maintained by the Mission in India, as also other social activities and relief works undertaken by it during floods, famines and pestilence, and of the centres of the Mission opened in America, both North and South, in Europe and in Indian settlements in Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius; it is also to be found in the religious classes and lectures held at the different centres and the religious and philosophical literature published by the Mission. The crowning architectural achievement of the Mission is the magnificent Sri Ramakrishna Temple which was completed year before last on the bank of the Ganges at Belur near Calcutta; and it is the ambition of the Mission to

establish a residential college there, destined, perhaps, to be the nucleus of the University foreshadowed by the prophetic vision of the Swami Vivekananda.

But what is the secret of the vitality of the visible achievements of the Mission that I have just described? Is it possible to detect the sings of a regenerated India in those achievements? Do they indicate how it may be possible for India to attain a true regeneration? These are questions of utmost spiritual importance.

Those of you who belong to the young generation will have no idea of the risk which the whole of India was running during the 2nd half of the 19th Century—the risk of losing her soul. The spirit of our civilisation had fallen into a deep slumber, and during the earlier half of the century it had looked as if a brutalized aristocracy, the rapacious horders of banditry and the armed might of forces led by foreigners were engaged in fights and conflicts for whatever booty they could seize, while the country suffered and endured. The lights of learning and culture had grown dim, the flowers of peace and well-being withered and wilted; and the spirituality of India of which we talk so much nowadays had retired into mountain caves and fastnesses leaving the vast masses of helpless prey to quackery and superstition and empty rituals and formulae. Suddenly, as from nowhere, came a new light and a new life—the vigorous and developed civilization of Europe. It brought a message of awakening of the sovereignty of human reason, of the power of the human will and the grandeur of the human individual, with his intellect, his sensibilities—yea, even his passions. It brought on an intoxication, a seeming liberation of the human spirit, which appeared to many to be infinitely preferable to the dark subjection into which the whole country had fallen; and it seemed to many of us that if we did not allow the new light to stream into the dark chambers of our house, we would remain condemned to eternal darkness. A few doubting voices were raised; and many were frightened and clung desperately to their chambers and their darkness, preferring the materialism of security to any spiritual questioning or adventure. But those whose eyes were opened were

dazzled by the new effulgence from the West. That hour, however, was one of the darkest in the history of India. A continuance of the intoxication with the new light meant, perhaps, the turning of India's back to her most precious possession, amounting to the losing of her soul.

At this juncture Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna appeared. He reiterated by his own experience and reaffirmed, in words of common speech, the eternal truths the ancient seers of the land had discovered. He taught Vivekananda and others to see, what many thinkers in both hemispheres are realizing to-day, that the civilisation of Europe may dazzle and attract, as the flame attracts the moth, but it cannot satisfy the human soul; that the pursuit of happiness, by itself, can never constitute the highest ideal; that the megalomania of the individual self leads to an irreconcileable conflict and an agonised futility; and that there must be a deliverance—through love and realization of an obedience to the Divine that exists in and beyond the world of phenomena—from the bonds that our passions and blindness forge round each individual self. He discovered these principles in the teachings of all the great religions. After him the dynamic personality of Swami Vivekananda strove in action, through planning and organisation, through service, example and precept, to realize his Master's teachings in the world of living men and women, not only in India but in other countries as well.

That the path of European culture cannot be the path of India has since been reaffirmed by other great souls. The mighty minds of India who realize this truth have but confirmed the same all the more greatly. We see before us to-day the logical consequences of the culture that has arisen and developed in Europe. We all admire the vigour, the vitality and the intellectual perspicacity of Europe, its efficient forms of Government; its public spirit, its literature, its arts. Europe presents a spectacle of dynamic and gigantic power and of the beauty that power, in action and repose, possesses. But power tends to rush headlong and to act headlong: where and to what end? That is a question which power is hardly in a position to ask of itself. Many master-minds can no doubt regard the play and interplay of power as

a satisfying drama, as an end in itself: it is all the richer and a better drama by the intermixture of pain and suffering, which it is the object of Indian system of religious and philosophical thought to get rid of, to seek deliverance from. The Greeks regarded tragedy as the highest form of drama, and Nietzsche welcomed life as it is, with its imperfections and sufferings. That appears to be the philosophy inherent in the European outlook in life. During past centuries it has been tempered by the Asiatic religion of Christianity, but its doctrines are being increasingly found to be incompatible with the fundamentally European conception of life.

To the intelligent mind that conception must remain unsatisfying and defective. It would seem to such a mind that the present War in Europe must be the logical conclusion of the way of life Europe has chosen to adopt. The dilemma is so great that an alternative to war in Europe has long become unthinkable.

His Worshipful Mayor of Bombay has in his address made eloquent reference to the War. Will not the War at least make all of us think what philosophy of life underlies it, to what extent that philosophy has spread its charms over the lives of all of us, and what may be the best corrective to such philosophy? In the spiritual world we are all, and must be, "experimenters with truth." Nowhere in the realm of real spiritual seeking will we come across any voice crying "Have a blind and unquestioning faith and all will be well." None becomes the *adhikari*, the worthy recipient, of a truth unless he has sought for it. Truth comes to no one unasked or unsolicited. Therefore the War will have done a great service if it arouses in us the spirit of seeking, of questioning what are regarded as the realities of life. In some of us it may also arouse a disgust (Vairagya) with our current mode of life. Only with such a spirit of seeking and of dissatisfaction is it possible for any one to stand on the path of ultimate realisation. And only in the final adoption of a new way of life will be found an escape from the horrors, sufferings and frustrations that must inevitably attend

the philosophy of life which lies at the bottom of the War in Europe. Our Order and our Mission stand for a way of life different from that which underlies the current European culture, though not conspicuously different from philosophies which have animated many other religious Orders. We invite all thinking men and women to ponder calmly over that philosophy of life, to test it by their personal experience, and to see if it gives adequate answers to the questions which must obstinately be rising daily in their minds.

To those amongst you who have already realized the truth of our ideals I say this—it should be our united endeavours to serve humanity in accordance with the provision and foreknowledge of Swami Vivekananda; and to that end we must lead all our energies in bringing about a regenerated India so that there may ultimately be a regenerated world. The task before us is truly a stupendous one. Rapid and surprisingly fruitful though the progress of our Mission has been in the past, our past achievements are insignificant compared with the vast and unaccomplished work before us. We need optimism and faith, men and funds, sympathy and enthusiasm, single-minded devotion and farsighted direction. For all this we pray to our Lord, we pray to humanity which enshrines our God, we pray to the future which calls and beckons to us. The response which we have hitherto received from the public has not been below our expectation. But we know that the Lord is with us, that Bhagawan Shree Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and his brother-disciples who have passed into eternity guide our faltering steps and enlighten our minds, and that the civilisation of this ancient Motherland of Religions, the spirit animating her long tradition, her chequered career and her diverse peoples will sustain us and nourish us to the end. May the Almighty sanctify the great ideal which our Mission has undertaken to realise,—"For the salvation of one's soul and the good of the world."

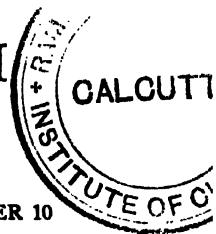
Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you once more for your kind welcome to me and for the noble sentiments expressed by your spokesman towards our Mission and myself.

THE  
VEDANTA KESARI

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**ASCETICISM—TRUE AND FALSE**

[The following verses point out some of the chief features of true asceticism, distinguishing it from what are mere aberrations of it.]

प्रसन्ना धीर्भनो भैरवं दया दानं दमः क्षमा ।  
येषां तेषां तपः श्लाघ्यं शोषाणां कायशोषणम् ॥ १ ॥

शान्तिस्पृशां विमलशीलदुर्कूललीलाशोभाजुषां विषयवेषपराङ्मुखानाम् ।  
चीनांशुकैर्भलिनशीलपटकरैर्वा नैवाभिमानकलना न च दैन्यवृत्तिः ॥ २ ॥

लभ्यते प्रशमश्लाध्या शोभा शोणेन वाससा ।  
सापराधेऽपि महतां न मन्युमलिनं मनः ॥ ३ ॥

किं तपोभिः सक्रोपानां विष्णुतानां वलेन क्रिप् ।  
विभवैः किं सलोभानां द्रुत्तानां श्रुतेन क्रिप् ॥ ४ ॥

धरीव धन्यं धनमुत्तमानां विश्वै चक्षुविजितेन्द्रियणाम् ।  
दर्थेवपुण्यं पुरुषोत्तमानां अत्मैव तीर्थं शुचिमानसानाम् ॥ ५ ॥

तेषामकार्यं क्रिमिवास्ति येषां क्रोशावस्त्रानि विलोचनानि ।  
दयाटरिदाणि मनांसि नित्यं नैर्धृण्यघोरणि च चेष्टितानि ॥ ६ ॥

मिथ्यातपस्त्विभिः किं तंः स्वसुखाय न यैः क्रुतः ।  
मनसः कोपतपस्य परिषेकः क्षमाम्बुद्भिः ॥ ७ ॥

केशोऽमूलनर्कमण्डवं निशिंतं नैर्धृण्यमावेदितं  
कौपीनांशुक्रवर्जनेन सुजने शीलस्य बार्तेव का ।  
दम्भाग्भम्भयङ्करे च वदने क्रोधः स्वयं लक्ष्यते  
नग्नानामशनैविणां नियमिनां येषां पश्चनामिव ॥ ८ ॥

अस्थाने भवतां भक्तिः केयमुच्छृङ्खलक्रमः ।  
न त्यक्तमशनं येन स कर्यं वस्त्रमुज्जक्ति ॥ ९ ॥

यवैते पशवः पूज्याः ततोत्सार्था भवन्ति के ।  
अथवा देशदोषोऽयं गतानुगतिका स्थितिः ॥ १० ॥

नैव व्रतानि ततुशोधनसाधनानि  
 नो पावनानि विजनानि तपोवनानि ।  
 पुंसां जटाजिनपरिग्रहदुर्ग्रहणां  
 चेतः स्थृहापरिचितं परिशोधयन्ति ॥ ११ ॥  
 न भूतिधवलैरिभे: पवनपायिभिर्वा पश्चै-  
 वैनव्यसनिभिर्मृगै: सललक्षैः स्थलीशायिभिः ।  
 फलप्रणयिभिः शुक्रैरपि निरम्बरैर्लुभकैर्  
 अमुक्तविषयस्थृहैरथिगता प्रशान्तिः क्वचित् ॥ १२ ॥  
 एते वने फलभुजः कपयो न मुक्ताः  
 वृक्षाः सवल्कलपलाशजटासटाश्च ।  
 अन्तर्जलप्रणयिनस्तिमयश्चतीये  
 मिथ्या तपःपरिकरः प्रशामोजिक्तानाम् ॥ १३ ॥  
 पायोभिः प्रसरत्तुषारशिशिरैः तुष्णातुगः ते परं  
 ते नित्यं च निधानधान्नि विवृतेऽप्यन्यादलं दुर्गताः ।  
 तेषां चन्दनपादपादुपनतः सन्तापकः पावको  
 यैरेष प्रशमव्रतोपकरणे बद्धोऽभिमानग्रहः ॥ १४ ॥  
 आकिञ्चन्यसुखाय निस्पृहतया वेराग्यलद्भीजुषः  
 सर्वं यान्ति विहाय कायसचिवाः सन्तः प्रशान्त्यै वनम् ।  
 तत्रापि व्रतडम्बरे परिकरारम्भाय चेत् सञ्चय  
 स्तुत् किं बोशपरिष्ट्रोपकरणेऽपराधः कृतः ॥ १५ ॥  
 गृहजालविमुक्तस्त्वं किं तत्रैवाभिधावसि ।  
 न हि निर्गत्य सागङ्गः पुनर्विशति वागुराम् ॥ १६ ॥

If asceticism should merit praise, it must be practised by one endowed with a clear mind and intellect, one who is full of friendliness, mercy, benevolence, self-control and forgiveness. It is a mere self-torture to those who are bereft of these qualities. (1) One shines in the silk-garment of an immaculate character at the touch of quietness; he has no more any taste for luxurious dress. Whether draped in superior China silk or clad in an outworn, ragged garment, he is neither proud of the one nor tormented by the feeling of destitution by the other. (2) Indeed he is invested with a new charm by the saffron clothes, which speak out his renunciation and calmness.

Such great ones never allow anger to sully their minds even when they have to deal with a culprit. (3) Of what good is asceticism, if one is an easy prey to anger? Of what avail is might, if one gets embarrassed at the needy hour? Is it not a travesty of erudition, if the learned man is not weaned from wickedness? (4) To the best men

good intention is the noblest possession. Knowledge is the organ of perception only to those who have conquered the senses. Worthy persons look for no religious merit other than the exercise of mercy. Should they, who possess a stainless mind, go in search of holy places? Are they not themselves holy? (5) With the looks emitting anger, mind utterly poor in compassionate feelings and deeds cruel and repulsive—is there any wrong which persons of such description will shrink from committing? (6) Is the world any better for pseudo-ascetics who, even for their own good, would not steep their minds, hot with anger, in the stream of patience and forgiveness? (7)

The very act of pulling out hairs from the head acquaints one with their arrant callousness. Is there anything left to be said about their decorum in good society, when it is known that they have discarded their loin-cloth? On their face anger makes its cruel appearance portending an outburst of arrogance. Are not these nude, food-seeking ascetics similar to roaming animals? (8) What a monstrous example of devotion, quite out of place! How can one possibly strip oneself nude when one is still in need of food? (9) Where such beasts are honoured, who are to be chased out, (*i.e.*, should real animals even be chased out?). Or, perhaps, it is a local evil. And men, after all, are bond-slaves to precedents. (10)

Vows, ascetic or otherwise, are but poor instruments for purifying one's self. Even sylvan solitudes whereto ascetics resort, are not holy in themselves. They cannot purify minds infested with cravings and longings, however much they may wear matted locks and practise mortifications. (11) The enjoyment of peace is never possible for those who have not rejected entirely the craving for sense pleasures. Elephants cover themselves with ashes, serpents live on air, beasts are eager to roam in forests, porcupines wallow on bare ground, parrots are fond of fruits, hunters are unclad,—but do they ever attain peace? (12) These frugivorous apes, unmolested denizen of forests, have not attained liberation; nor have these gigantic trees, with the locks of intertwined branches, beards of overgrown twigs and dress of their own bark, attained that goal. We also know for certain that fish immersed always in water have not fared better. It is labour wasted to launch on sham asceticism when control of mind is not achieved. (13)

Those who have entered the tranquil vow of monasticism and feel vain about the means that are to be adopted to achieve their goal deserve only pity. These poor creatures are like one who is tormented by thirst even though he has free access to cool, sparkling water; like one who is poverty-stricken even when a vast treasure is uncovered to his perpetual view; like he who is scorched by heat even though the breeze from the sandalwood grove is blowing over him. (14) Good souls repair to the forests in quest of absolute peace and happiness that

voluntary poverty would give, forsaking everything,— rejecting every desire and shining with the beauty of renunciation. But suppose they begin assembling, even in that place, various necessities to enrich their ascetic vow, should they not for a moment think what offence their treasures and rich garments and attendants and other appendages have committed in their own homes? (15) You have left home for homelessness; then why do you turn again towards the circumstances of the home? Once escaped from the hunter's noose the spotted deer would never again come back to jump into it. (16)

—*Avadanakalpalata.*

## THE SYMBOLS OF A GREAT CULTURE

### I

THE Himalayas, the Ganges and the Sanskrit literature—these, it is generally believed, have contributed above all, to the glory of India. To see that this belief has not arisen from fancy or sentiment does not require any argument, if one has a fairly good acquaintance with these phenomena and the social and historical background of Indian culture. Contemplating at the foot of the Eternal Abode of Snow, the Vedic sages, as they turned their awe-filled vision upwards, must have certainly been struck by the witchery of that sublime, stupendous, phenomenon and burst into divine poetry. And in the *Rigveda* we read: "Whose glory yonder peaks of snow declare, whose magnitude the sea-girt earth witness (*Yasyeme himavanto mahitva yasya samudram rasaya saha ahuh*)." So from the dawn of history the Himavant has been the symbol of the Eternal, urging on the children of this blessed land after the true, the beautiful and the abiding.

The Ganges is the symbol of holiness—*Dharmadraya* or the liquid of sanctity and religious merit, as it is described in the Puranas. Mother of

a grand civilization, the greatness of hers far exceeds the strange bactericidal efficacy of her waters demonstrated under laboratory conditions recently. For countless generations she has been the solace of millions of Hindus burdened with sins and sorrows of this mundane existence, and therefore her glory has been sung in a hundred hymns and psalms by many a poet-saint. Hardly will it be challenged if one were to assert that almost the whole of Hindu culture is a rich crop raised on the fertile Gangetic basin and slowly distributed abroad.

### II

The third of the triad forming the symbols of Indian culture is the Sanskrit literature, which with its ethnic bearings and social implications, we shall consider here at some length. We feel its relevance the more because there has been some dust of controversy raised in this part of the country regarding its significance and the status it ought to hold in a scheme of liberal education. Those very people who in their laudable endeavour to give a right vocational turn to the educational machinery of the country, are often found to tolerate and even

bless subjects which when compared with Sanskrit fare no better in their bread and butter winning value. Leaving them apart, there are others, though an unenlightened group, to whom it is an anathema as they associate Sanskrit with the supposed demons they ostensibly seek to combat. Early in the last century there were people in the West of the type of Dugald Stewart who believed that the entire Sanskrit language and literature "was the forgery of those wily priests, the Brahmins." A somewhat similar view is fostered by certain groups even to-day and attempts are not totally absent to crowd out or count out Sanskrit from the branches of study, or at least relegate it to an insignificant position.

To see how far this is desirable we need only to run our eyes on the past of Europe which many of us have accepted as our pattern in political and social progress. The dazzling civilization of the occident was not called up by rubbing an Aladdin's Lamp. Ancient Greece lives through the art, philosophy and religion of Europe; Rome has reincarnated through Church and State; the moors of Cordova refined Europe; the Jews too had their handsome contributions to make up the complex we call Western civilization. Greek and Latin have predominated till very recently. There was a time when Shopenhauer lamented: "If the threatened calamity should ever come, and the ancient languages cease to be taught, a new literature will arise of such barbarous, shallow and worthless stuff as was never seen before." His exaggerated fear was not without the usual grain of truth in it, and we have still a lesson to learn from it. But

Greek and Latin remained sufficiently long to enrich the modern languages of Europe and make them what they are to-day.

### III

Hatred of culture, of whichever people and due to whatever cause, is the sure sign of spiritual death. The expanding and absorbing mind of Europe found soon that "Sanskrit was substantially the same language as Greek, Latin and Anglo-saxon." Appropriation and assimilation of the mental wealth of the whole humanity is the hall-mark of races gifted with the curiosity to know, venturesomeness to pursue and vigour to expand; while exclusive parochial pride for the cultural heirloom transmitted from the ancestors of a local group alone is the sign of stagnation and decay. It is not astonishing to see opposition put up against Sanskrit culture in India when Europe can boast of the largest collection of Sanskrit manuscripts preserved in the best possible way, and when we see that most of the first-rate Western universities have chairs established for the study of Sanskrit, and painstaking scholars do their best to bring out the rare treasures of India with the best elucidatory apparatus? The fancied opposition between a Dravidian and Aryan language and culture is the result of new motives.

Europe soon recovered from the distorted views she contracted from imperfect data at her first contact with India. As early as 1883 Prof. Max Muller wrote:

"Whoever cares for the historical growth of our language, that is our thoughts; whoever cares for the first intelligible development of religion and mythology; whoever cares for the first foundation of what

in later times we call the science of astronomy, metronomy, grammar, and etymology; whoever cares for the first intimations of philosophical thought, for the first attempts at regulating family life, village life, and State life, as founded on religion, ceremonial, tradition and contract—must in future pay the same attention to the literature of the Vedic period as to the literatures of Greece and Rome and Germany."

He frankly recognised the unparalleled importance of the Vedic literature for a study of Aryan humanity and held it to be indispensable for all who cared for themselves, for their ancestors, for history, for their intellectual development; and as an element of liberal education, he openly declared that Sanskrit was far more important and far more improving than the reigns of Babylonian and Persian kings and even the dates and deeds of many of the kings of Judah and Israel. Max Muller was profoundly erudite in various literatures and branches of learning, as the huge output of his literary activity shows, and he was by no means a partisan of Sanskrit; yet he exhorted the young civilians who were to proceed to India, in these words: "....I should advise every young man who wishes to enjoy his life in India, and to spend his years there with profit to himself and to others, to learn Sanskrit, and to learn it well."

Even in India there are people today who maintain that Sanskrit, after all, is a dead language and it is in the custody of a microscopic, ineffectual minority, and that in the active life of the nation as a whole, its neglect is only well-merited. Max Muller meets the line of argument in these pregnant words:

"....there runs through the whole history of India, through its three or four thousand

years, a high road, or, it is perhaps more accurate to say, a high mountain-path of literature. It may be remote from the turmoil of the plain, hardly visible perhaps to the millions of human beings in their daily struggle of life. It may have been trodden by a few solitary wanderers only. But to the historian of the human race, to the student of the development of the human mind, those few solitary wanderers are after all the true representatives of India from age to age. Do not let us be deceived. The true history of the world must always be the history of the few; and as we measure the Himalayas by the height of Mount Everest, we must take the true measure of India from the poets of the Veda, the Sages of the Upanishads, the founders of the Vedanta and Sankhya philosophies, and the authors of the oldest law-books, and not from the millions who are born and die in their villages, and who have never for one moment been roused out of their drowsy dream of life."

In the West the discovery of Sanskrit paved the way for the organization of new branches of knowledge: philology, comparative religion and comparative philosophy, which have clear bearings on the social history of man. Truths from this ancient literature, rays of light available nowhere else, have penetrated into the current of European thought from this new source, and unbiased scholars were gratified to find that they now possessed reliable literary source to study the religious development of human mind long before Homer was born. A sense of kinship with the distant people of the East began to stir the minds of the best people in Europe. Although the first enthusiasm of the new discovery has faded to some extent, scholarly contributions to the study of Sanskrit from the West has remained grand and great, and, no doubt, the literature of Sanskrit will continue to fill the souls of the West with new enchantment.

## IV

As the animating central core and prototype of several Aryan languages Sanskrit has entered into the linguistic history of over 200 million people in some way or other. Just a century ago H. H. Wilson wrote: "Every person acquainted with the spoken speech of India knows perfectly well that its elevation to the dignity and usefulness of written speech has depended, and must still depend, upon its borrowing largely from its parent or kindred source .....and that the condemnation of the classical languages to oblivion would consign the dialects to utter helplessness and irretrievable barbarism." This, with regard to the position of the spoken tongues of India. But there was a time when Sanskrit exerted its influence as far as Chinese Turkistan, and as a vehicle of Buddhism it touched the heart of Central and Eastern Asia and its vocabulary percolated into the speeches of East Indies, Malaya and even the distant Madagascar on the opposite direction. A language that has a literary development of over four millenniums in every species of literary creation, epic and lyric, narrative and drama, philosophy and technical subjects, cannot easily be overlooked. The published works in Sanskrit are thousands; those in manuscripts and those dimly known through earlier references are legions; and among them there are a multitude of books that have given and continue to give lasting pleasure to men of taste and a way of life to those who search for it; such a language cannot be considered a dead one as the Welsh language—in fact it is perpetually and violently alive.

Time has only tested its worth. The training and arduous labour required in mastering the Sanskrit literature renders the mind sensitive to facts that often escape eyes accustomed to other superficial ways. A scholar trained in the ancient model never turns to the next passage before the last ounce of meaning is extracted from a phrase or a sentence he familiarises himself with; he never becomes a slipshod reader.

## V

Conscious of these and other values of Sanskrit and its deep import, Swami Vivekananda insisted on a wide-spread study of it as he believed that "the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race." With his usual zeal he wished that the "whole nation should become Sanskrit scholars." The spread of Sanskrit among the masses alone would introduce culture into the blood, he argued, although information can be had even through other channels. He believed that the whole of India is Aryan and nothing else. He declared that it was pure nonsense and foolish talk to extend the analogy of Europeans migrating from cold and inhospitable regions to more sunny tracts and exterminating the aborigines for colonisation, in the case of India too; and in fact the theory of Aryan migration itself which rests on certain flimsy linguistic resemblances was, according to him, mere guess-work. He pointed out that the civilization of Lanka depicted in Ramayan is not in any way inferior to that of Ayodhya. He wrote:

"Whatever may be the import of the philological terms 'Aryan' and 'Tamilian,' even taking for granted that both these

grand sub-divisions of Indian humanity came from outside the Western frontier, the dividing line had been, from the most ancient times, one of language and not of blood. Not one of the epithets expressive of contempt for the ugly physical features of the Dasyus of the Vedas would apply to the great Tamilian race.....The super-arrogated excellence of birth of any caste in India is only pure myth, and in no part of India has it, we are sorry to say, found such congenial soil owing to linguistic differences, as in the south.....A gentle yet clear brushing off of the cobwebs of the so-called Aryan theory and all its vicious corollaries is therefore absolutely necessary... this Aryan race, itself a mixture of two great races, Sanskrit-speaking and Tamil-speaking, applies to all Hindus alike."

## VI

It is interesting to note in this connection on what a loose foundation rests the cocksure theories of early Orientalists and the facile propaganda of shallow, irresponsible text-book writers who have successively helped to demarcate India with a wall of racial hatred which in reality has no reason to exist. Keane wrote in his *Man Past and Present* that the term 'Aryan' was a linguistic expression forced by the philologists into the domain of ethnology where it carries no significance, as it is well evidenced to-day by the ridiculous racial claims of Herr Hitler. The measurements of skull and registering of complexion cannot give any sure result regarding this problem.

There is no evidence of an Aryan migration in the Vedas. The word *Arya* occurs in a multitude of places in the *Rigveda* as the name of the group that worshipped the outstanding Vedic Gods Indra and Agni. Sayana explains the term as the name of those who praise the gods by hymns, or

those noble persons who perform particular religious rites. Throughout Sanskrit literature nobility is the one central meaning of the word *Arya*, and it never denoted a separate race. The Dasyus, whom our historians identify with the so-called Dravidians, are then made an antagonistic race whom the invading Aryans drove away or exterminated. But the terms *anagni*, *apavrata*, *abrahma* and the like which characterise them do not denote anything more than a difference in cult, i.e., they did not share the same way of rituals which the other group built up. They were not racially different, but only differing in the ways of worship. Sayana clearly states in *Aitareya Brahmana*, VII: 18. that the Dasyus are the descendants of Visvamitra who is a recognised Aryan sage. In the *Mahabharata*, too, we get clear statements that the Pundras, Dravidas and others were only Kshatriyas become Dasyus because of their cutting adrift from the Brahmanical way of living. To the ancients all men of India are offsprings of Manu, the common progenitor.

The word Dravida, again, is only the Sanskrit form of Tamizha; there is no reason whatsoever to suppose that the Sanskrit word Dravida was turned into Tamizha; for the Tamilians are known to have been inhabiting the south from the earliest times. The name is entirely based on linguistic grounds, and no race distinction is in evidence anywhere. In the ancient books, Panchagauda and Panchadravida are employed to convey the difference of Achara (conduct) among the respective groups of Brahmins, and there is no hint that they were names of distinct people.

The most inexcusable fiat of the anthropologist is the facile identification of the Dasyus and the Dravidians and thus dividing the Indian humanity into two racial hemispheres. That this has become the drive for a new zeal which has social and political bearings to-day is the tragedy of the whole situation.

## VII

Sanskrit and Tamil represent two great linguistic divisions like Greek and Latin, which have contributed to the cultural past of India. Their mutual influence is evident throughout history except perhaps in the earliest strata of Sanskrit. Therefore when we take Sanskrit as the symbol of Indian unity, the whole of Indian culture is expressed by it; and instead

of intensifying the common achievements of our ancestors, if the present generation read imaginary differences into the descriptions of an almost poetical character found in ancient works and boost up a race myth, it will only be the greatest disservice done to the common advancement of India. On the other hand, if the grand language which the superior intellectual powers of our ancestors have evolved is taken as the symbol of a basic culture and upon it is built a brilliant future for the thought and life of the land, we shall be worthy of the great forefathers, the Rishis. For, the humanising value of this classical language is hardly approached by any other language of the world, and it is only fit that it stands as the symbol of the culture which it ensouls.

## THE ABUNDANT LIFE

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

(The Swami is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order preaching the message of Vedanta in the United States of America. In the following article, which forms the text of a lecture delivered by him at St. Louis in June, 1939, he explains rationally what fulness of life means and how it can be achieved.—The Editors.)

### WHAT ELEVATES MAN ABOVE OTHER ANIMALS?

A PERSON whose body is healthy and strong, whose senses are keen and vigorous, whose organs function properly, who can eat hearty meals without fearing the consequences, who sleeps soundly, enjoys the world through all the variety and richness of sense experience, who has no worries about anything—such a person is said to be full of life. But it would not be proper to say that his life is full or abundant, because he

has developed only one side of it—the physical side. This is not the whole of life. He whose sole concern is to eat, sleep, and enjoy is no better than an animal. An animal also is healthy and strong, moves about freely, enjoys life, and seldom falls sick. True, the enjoyments of some are finer and richer than those of animals. But this still leaves them nothing more than a superior type of animal, not differing essentially from them.

What is the difference between man and other animals? Man lives; ani-

mals, trees and plants also live. The difference is this: animals and plants live but cannot think. Man can think; man can have knowledge. Man not only sees things, but reads and interprets them; he can find out their meaning. Man can look far beyond the senses. It is man who discovers the laws of nature, unravels the secrets of life, probes into the deepest mysteries of existence; he is able to distinguish between the real and the unreal, the good and the pleasant, between right and wrong. And not only this. Man can regulate his life by his knowledge. This is what other living creatures cannot do.

So with man the main point is not simply living but the *how* of living. The art of life is more important than the life itself. In human life there must be an ideal, a philosophy, a regulative principle. He who lacks this, he who never thinks of the meaning and the purpose of life but simply lives, his life is of no value. He is no better than a breathing machine; he breathes but does not live—just as the bellows of a blacksmith.

Thus a human being has two distinct aspects of life, the physical and the psychical. The psychical aspect, if taken in the broadest sense, includes the intellectual, the moral, the aesthetic, and the spiritual life. So the psychical life or, I may say, the inner life, is much vaster, higher, and grander than the physical life, that is, the life on the sense plane. The physical life is only the outer rim of our being, the center of which is the inner life. Our thoughts, our imaginings, our moral ideas, our spiritual visions, all are great controlling forces in our physical life. It is true

that the body influences the mind, but the body does not govern the mind; on the contrary, the mind governs the body. We cannot live the physical life in the right sense unless our inner life is sound. In order to keep the body healthy and fit we need to study the physical system, know the hygienic laws and observe them. Out of this need medical science has developed. You all know how much the knowledge of the physical universe has contributed to our material progress.

#### INNER LIFE

We require not only intelligence but moral principles as well to regulate the life on the physical plane. If there is violent emotional excitement or severe conflict within us, our nervous system is shattered. The body becomes a wreck. When anger, hatred, jealousy, or intolerance prevails in us, our social life, too, disintegrates; we find discord in all the fields of collective life. In order to live in peace and harmony we have to cultivate moral and spiritual virtues.

Now, it may be asked: Is the inner life to be developed for the sake of the physical life? Should scientific knowledge be cultivated only for the promotion of material welfare? Should our philosophy be guided by pragmatic considerations alone? Should religion, art, and ethics subserve the interests of the sense life?

Life on the physical plane is so predominant in our consciousness that compared with this, the finer aspects of life seem insignificant. This, our body as well as this world, we can see, touch, and feel. The sense objects appear so real, so charming,

to us that for their sake we do not hesitate to sacrifice the subtler realities. Our religion, our art, our ethics, our science, our philosophy, appear to be of no value if they do not advance the cause of the material life—the practical life, as we call it. In fact, we judge the inner powers and virtues by the standard of the material good we can derive from them—as if the material values were of greater consequence than the moral and spiritual values! This confusion of values in the modern age has brought the world to its present chaotic condition. It cannot be that we shall have inner development only for the sake of material well-being; rather our material life must be so regulated as to promote inner growth. The inner self is the ruler of the physical life. The spirit should utilize matter to its own advantage, not permitting matter to usurp the mastership.

The superiority of the inner life when compared with the physical is not difficult to perceive. Physical life may come to an end at any time. But what intellectual progress we make, what moral and spiritual worth we acquire in this life, persists even after the body drops, for this does not belong to the gross body but inhere in a vital part of our being that does not perish with the body. According to all religions the soul exists even after the separation from the body. From the biological standpoint also it does not seem reasonable that consciousness, which is the highest achievement of nature, which nature has developed in the course of the countless ages, should be a mere servant of the physical organism and should not exist by its own right.

This appears to be contrary to the principle of evolution.

It is also a fact of common experience that the inner life is of greater importance than the outer life. Suppose a man is living under very desirable conditions. He resides in a beautiful, richly furnished home. Everything around him is in perfect order; everything outside is bright and charming, but within him all is darkness, all is chaos—no peace, no light. Would you think this to be an enviable state of affairs? Now think of a person who lives in very humble circumstances, satisfied with the bare necessities of life, free from worries, doubts and fears, who has inner peace and joy in consequence of a true understanding of life. Which of the two lives would you prefer? "Certainly the latter," you will all say.

#### ADVANCE IN MENTAL EVOLUTION

##### INDICATED BY INTEREST IN INNER LIFE

It is also found that the higher a person advances, the greater his interest in the inner life. A scientist will find greater delight in the solution of a problem than in the finest sense enjoyment. A philosopher relishes an intellectual discussion much more than his dinner. Persons of great culture always forgo material gain for the attainment of inner greatness. "Plain living and high thinking" is their motto. Great personages the world over have sacrificed even their lives for the sake of knowledge, truth, and virtue. In the history of humanity we find martyrs in religion, in science, in philosophy, and in nationalism. The world knows the story of Socrates' death.

## TWO GREAT EXAMPLES

Permit me to relate the story of the self-sacrifice of Bruno, an Italian philosopher of the sixteenth century, which may not be so well known. In his works on the infinity of the universe Bruno expressed views not in conformity with the dogmas of the Dominicans, though a Dominican himself. He was accused of heresy and had to leave Italy. He sought refuge in Switzerland, in France, in England, in Germany and at last again in Italy. He was cast into prison by the Roman Inquisition. Afterwards he was brought before the judges and declared guilty. As he refused to renounce his views, knowing them to be correct, the judges sentenced him to death "without effusion of blood." Bruno was burnt alive at the stake. And these are said to have been his memorable words to the judges: "You who sentence me to death live in greater fear than I who am condemned."

Another heroic example I may give you from the life of one of the religious leaders of India, who lived in the seventeenth century. This brave Guru of the Sikhs was accused of treason, arrested, and brought before the mighty Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb. The emperor was ready to spare his life if only he would embrace Islam. Guru Teg Bahadur refused. Hence he was beheaded. After the execution a small piece of paper was found tied to his neck with these words: "I have lost my head but I have not lost my faith."

## SENSE LIFE AFFORDS

NO SATISFACTION TO THE THOUGHTFUL  
—IT IS ONLY A MEANS AT THE BEST

This life of sense experience, however dear it may be to us, cannot be

an end in itself. It is so uncertain, so unsatisfying. However successful, happy, or promising a life one may live, death may put an end to it most abruptly. There is no good here without concomitant evil. Pain comes in the guise of pleasure. Virtue suffers; vice prospers. Such is this life. It is not self-explanatory. There must be something beyond it to fulfil it. We can find meaning in this life only if we take it as a preparatory stage for a higher existence. To me this world appears to be a huge factory, where divine man is being manufactured out of brute man. If you enter a factory and see things in the process of making, you cannot easily understand what is going on there. Similar is the case of the world. Life seems meaningless to a casual observer. In order to extract gold from ore, you have to take the ore to the smeltery, subject it to heat, dip it in water, batter it by hammering, and pass it through other processes before pure gold emerges out of the crude metal. Similarly, the animal man has to pass through many trials and struggles, successes and failures, hopes and fears, smiles and tears, before his spiritual self shines forth in its native purity, free from all crudities of the physical life.

So this sense life of ours is for the development of the spiritual life. First of all it builds the intellectual life by furnishing the mind with experiences. We are gaining experiences all our life. What is the ultimate experience or conviction we gain from this life? This: Sense pleasures can never bring us true satisfaction. We must seek life's fulfilment elsewhere. What we seek is not to be found in

material existence. What we seek is not the evanescent but the eternal. We seek the changeless, not the changeful. We seek the real, not the unreal. We seek the infinite, not the finite. We seek true light, true freedom, true joy. We seek the Absolute, the Perfect, the Divine. This is the knowledge that dawns upon the mind after it has passed through many, many, many, experiences on the physical plane. Our intellectual life attains fulfilment when intellect presents to us this Supreme Ideal and the way to realize it, when it makes us aware of the presence of the Divine Spirit within us as our inmost self: ever free, ever pure, ever blissful, self-illuminated.

#### THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE MORAL LIFE

The intellectual life is much more expansive than this sense-bound life on the physical plane. Intellect broadens our vision, deepens insight, and opens before us higher and higher realms of existence. But intellect cannot lead us very far unless supported by the moral life. On the moral plane we feel still greater freedom and expansion of life. Intellect cannot free us from the thrall of the senses. Even a highly intellectual man is found to be suffering from the weaknesses of the flesh. A moral man is immune to these. This is why a morally advanced person is held in much greater esteem than a man of mere intellectual greatness. The moral life is closer to the soul than the intellectual, being the expression of the higher mental plane, which is in direct touch with the soul. It is through the moral life that the soul

finds self-expression on the intellectual and the physical planes. This is why morality is *sine qua non* of spiritual life and spiritual knowledge. An immoral man, however advanced intellectually, cannot have spiritual light.

#### UNSELFISHNESS IS THE TOUCHSTONE OF VIRTUE

The basic principle of a moral life is unselfishness. No moral virtue can exist where selfishness rules. Anger, hatred, jealousy, lust, avarice, fear, pride, hypocrisy, and so forth prevail in us because we are selfish. When we are unselfish, then only moral qualities, such as kindness, forgiveness, humility, purity, sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness can function within us.

Unselfishness seeks expression in the positive form of love. What is love? Love means self-expansion. When you have love you are no longer confined within your body. You find yourself in others as well. Thus as love develops more and more, you transcend the narrow limits of family, community, city, country, nation, race, creed, yea, even humanity; and eventually you identify yourself with all beings. This is self-expansion. And the more you expand, the more of life you have. We know from our own experience that when we perform any act of disinterested love, we feel free and full of life; but when selfishness takes hold of us, we feel cooped in; choked to death, as it were. It has been very admirably said by Swami Vivekananda: "Expansion is life; contraction is death. Love is expansion, therefore love is life; hatred is contraction, therefore hatred is death."

Here lies the secret of the abundant life.

#### SPIRITUAL LIFE—THE GOAL

But this is not all. The moral life attains its consummation in the spiritual life. The ultimate basis of morality is spirituality. Spirituality means the realization of one's own self as spirit, as soul: pure, illumined, free, blissful. At the present stage of life we have no knowledge of the soul, our real self. We are fully aware of the physical body and think of the body as our very self. Our thoughts and actions are dominated by this body-consciousness. But the body is not our real self. Our real self is spirit—immortal and divine. As the consciousness of this spiritual self dawns upon the mind, a person realizes himself more and more as a spiritual entity, becomes more and more united with the Divine in spirit, and his thoughts and actions proceed from that self-realization. This is what is meant by spiritual life.

With self-realization one transcends the material plane of multiplicity and enters the realm of universal Spirit. Spirit has neither form, nor color, nor sex, nor denomination. It is in unison with the Infinite. So through the realization of the spiritual self one realizes one's unity with the all-pervasive Divine Being that shines in us as our inmost self. A man of the highest realization no longer thinks of his narrow individuality. He no more finds himself limited by form, place, and time. His self becomes so magnified that he sees himself in all. He experiences that he is in man, he is in woman, he is in the saint, he is in the sinner, he is in every living creature; he is in the sun, he

is in the moon, he is everywhere; never did he not exist, he exists for ever. This is the abundant life. There is no life anywhere but in Spirit. Spirit alone lives—the Eternal, the Immutable. It is Spirit that enlivens the body, enlivens the mind, enlivens nature. Every being, everything in this universe, is mortal. Why? Because their life is borrowed. Spirit is the only reality, the very existence, the being-ness. Everything else has its being in Spirit. Without Spirit everything is but shadow. It is the life of Spirit that Jesus meant when he said, "I came that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10: 10.) With regard to the sense life he declared, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it. (Matthew 16: 25.)

#### UNDERLYING SPIRITUAL ONENESS

The universality of Spirit is not poetic imagination nor is it a metaphysical abstraction but a truth demonstrated by the experience of great seers and saints in all climes and ages. All the great world-teachers were possessed of universal love, which was the outcome of their consciousness of the oneness of the Self. They loved all without distinction; though reviled and persecuted, they loved their enemies because they found the Self in friend and in foe alike; rather to them there was neither friend nor foe; only the One Self, existing in all. As an illustration of the realization of the One Self in all, I may cite an incident from the life of Sri Ramakrishna. One day in December, 1885, during his last illness, some of his young disciples prayed him that for their sake he should prolong his earthly

existence. They knew that he was a great Yogi; so if he willed, he could stay with them longer in the physical body. "How can that be?" replied Sri Ramakrishna. "My mind has been given to the Divine Mother once for all. Should I ask it back for the sake of this cage of flesh and bone?" "For our sake," implored the disciples. "Everything depends on the Mother's will," answered Sri Ramakrishna. "Your will and the Mother's will are the same," insisted the disciples; "if not, please ask the Divine Mother to spare you for some time longer in this human life." At last Sri Ramakrishna agreed. After a while one of the disciples came forward and inquired whether he had prayed to the Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna answered, "Yes, I was going to tell the Divine Mother: 'Mother, I cannot swallow food; let this body take some food.' Just then the Mother showed me, 'As I am eating through so many mouths, what matters it if I do not eat through this one mouth?'"

He who realizes the Self draws his power directly from the Self, that is, from the omnipotent, omniscient Divine being. We are always drawing what energy, what vitality, what intelligence, we possess from this one Source. But we draw feebly and indirectly. Our ignorance and egoism obstruct and obscure the course. We have forgotten that we are eternally united with the Divine. Instead, we have taken the material adjuncts of the soul, the psycho-physical complex, to be our very self. Neither the body, nor the mind, nor their compound constitutes our real being. With the knowledge of the Self, egoism vanishes; ignorance dies out as we realize our

unity with the Divine. Then the flood-gate of Divine Energy opens within us and the Divine Life overflows our entire being. This is how the great spiritual leaders of the world were dynamos of unlimited power, unlimited knowledge, unbounded love. Think of Buddha, Christ, Sankara! What material resources did they have in life? None! What, then, was the secret of their power? This, that they drew from the very fountain-head of life. Within them there was no barrier of ignorance or egoism. So they were perfect channels of the Divine Life, the Divine Light, the Divine Love. Within a few years of earthly existence they manifested life and light sufficient to guide humanity for centuries and centuries.

#### ON THE SPIRITUAL PLANE LIFE IN ITS FULNESS IS REALISED

So in order to have true life and have it abundantly we must rise to the spiritual plane. We should so regulate this humdrum life of eating, drinking, dressing, talking, earning, and enjoying as to lead us to higher and higher levels of consciousness. In no case should we hold our moral and spiritual nature in fealty to the sense life. Do not fear that your practical life will be cramped if it is subordinated to the spiritual ideal. On the contrary, moral purity and spiritual wisdom will react on the material life and make it conduce to real good, peace, and happiness. There is no dearth of material resources in the world at the present time; still the world is rushing headlong to a catastrophe! Why? Because there is no inner goodness, nor true understanding

to manipulate the material powers to the best advantage.

The spiritual life is the only life which knows no death, no decay, no darkness. Because this is the life of Spirit, which is self-existent, self-luminous, self-fulfilled. When the Divine Life flows into a person, all weakness leaves him, all darkness vanishes from his mind. His body, his senses, his mind, become so surcharged with the Divine Life that his thoughts, words, and deeds always

rebound to the good of the world. No untruth goes over his lips. His very presence is an inspiration. Though apparently living in the body he is so far above the physical plane that those conditions to which the body is subject by its very nature cannot affect the inner glow of the spiritual life and light. He faces death with a smiling face, because he knows that for him there is no death. He is in the fulness of the Divine Life while in the body; he is one with the Divine Life when without the body.

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA BY A DISCIPLE

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life-time he had travelled extensively all over India, and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are culled from the diaries of his disciples, and contain many of the instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.—The Editors.]

AFTER his supper Mahapurushji was taking rest. Many of the monastic inmates of the Ashrama had also assembled there. One of them gently asked: "Maharaj, is it true that Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'for those that come here, this is the last birth?' Did you ever hear him say like that?" Mahapurushji kept quiet for a while and then said, "Is it not said so in the books?"

Sannyasin: What is the implication of those words of Sri Ramakrishna? Do they refer only to those that had the good fortune of seeing Sri Ramakrishna physically and with his grace could attain to devotion and faith, or does it signify that it is the last birth for all that have faith in him?"

Mahapurushji: All these are alluded to by his words. Whosoever has faith in him, whether seeing him physically or in any other way, whosoever has sincere regard for him and has consecrated himself to him with the body, mind and speech, it is the last birth for him. He is a liberated soul. But self-surrender is indispensable.

Sannyasin: Maharaj, are they, who came here depending on Sri Ramakrishna, also free?

Mahapurushji: Yes, what doubt is there? But to be really free, complete self-surrender is imperative. Even simply to come here, is no less a good fortune.

Sannyasin: But we don't feel like achieving anything, and nothing palpable seems to be happening to us also.

Mahapurushji: My child, what you could accomplish so long and what you have been doing till now, do you think it is very insignificant? Without his grace this also would not be possible. Great indeed is his compassion on you, otherwise why should he bring you here, away from the loving embrace of your parents, away from your hearth and home. That he may shower his blessings on you and make your human birth fruitful, he has brought you here.

Sannyasin: But, Maharaj, we don't seem to grow in self-abnegation and renunciation by performing these works. .

Mahapurushji: All that you do here are his works. You are doing these only for pleasing God. In these you have no desire for your own enjoyment. What you do here will augment your self-abnegation and renunciation. Do you think that simply by living on alms at Hrishikesh you will acquire renunciation! Shame! What you are doing now is the right thing. At present you may not possess that consciousness, but gradually you will find yourself firmly established in that consciousness, in that knowledge: that everything is his. There will be nothing for you to claim as your own.

Sannyasin: But where is that condition for us, Maharaj? Unless and until the Ego is annihilated in deep meditation, where is the prospect for peace? But we cannot even meditate well.

Mahapurushji: My son, all these will happen to you. Gradually you will get all these. I assure you. Have faith.

After the usual repast at night the monks have congregated in Mahapurushji's room to be blessed by his holy company. Silence reigns all around. Slowly Mahapurushji begins his reminiscences about Swamiji: "Here Swamiji lived as the guest of Mr. Chabildas for a pretty long time. It was during this period that he visited many places in the neighbourhood.....

"Even while here, Swamiji visited Poona, Malabar and the adjoining places. Generally he did not avail himself of the comforts of train journey, but when he did, he travelled first-class only. He did not accept any pecuniary help from anybody. But when greatly pressed, he asked them to buy a first-class ticket for him. He used to suffer from chronic stomach troubles necessitating frequent use of the closet and could not brook much delay. It is only in the first-class that one could enjoy this convenience.

Once, invited most probably by the Maharaja of Limbdi, he was travelling to his place. As usual he was lying down upon a berth of a first-class compartment, in ordinary dress, with only a jersey on his body. In that very compartment some respectable people of the locality got in. Now, they were very angry to find a Sadhu in that attire occupy a whole berth and began to chaff him in English. They indulged in the abuse of the Sadhus, saying that it is they who had brought about the downfall of India. Swamiji was comfortably lying down and listening to everything. At last, they went to such excess that he could no longer keep quiet. He suddenly got up and entered into an argument with them.

He said, 'What nonsense, do you speak! Is it the Sadhus who have ruined India, or is it they who have saved her? What were Buddha, Sankara and Sri Chaitanya; and what did they do for India's uplift? Only think of that.' Thus beginning, he, by citations from history, proved that it is the Sadhus who have enabled India to live; and gradually he met all their arguments so nicely that they were struck dumb. Seeing his mastery over English and his arguments, the chief among the new-comers was so much charmed that he invited Swamiji to his place. Of course, Swamiji could not accept that invitation at that time, as he was then going as a guest of the Maharaja of Limbdi who had great reverence for Swamiji. But on another occasion he halted at Poona.

After some time one of the Sannyasins asked Mahapurushji "Who conferred on you the appellation 'Mahapurush'?"

Mahapurushji: It was Swamiji who used to call me Mahapurush.

Sannyasin: May I ask why? Is there any special reason for this?

Mahapurushji: Yes, there is. When I began going to Sri Ramakrishna, I had to visit home, now and then, as I had been married some time ago. But this I did not relish at all. Somehow I passed the night there by constantly taking the Lord's name. But my wife used to weep and wail. So I apprised Sri Ramakrishna of everything and prayed to him to cut asunder all my bondage. Sri Rama-

krishna on hearing everything taught me a Yogic practice and said 'Don't be afraid. I am always here to help you. Always meditate upon me and do this Yogic practice. Then nothing adverse will happen to you. Even if you live in the same room with your wife it will not injure you. Rather, you will find that your renunciation will grow stronger and stronger.' Sri Ramakrishna had taught Rakhal Maharaj also a like Yogic practice. By following his advice, I was saved from disturbances of all kinds. One day I happened to tell this to Swamiji in course of a talk. He was very much surprised and said 'What do you say! This is the sign of great souls. Verily, you are a Mahapurush (great soul). From that time he began to call me 'Mahapurush' and all others followed suit. Formerly Swamiji used to call me 'Tarakda' (Brother Tarak). One day at the Balaram Mandir he was calling me Mahapurush. Hearing that the Mother of Baburam Maharaj said, "What may that be! The Mahapurush\* is said to live on trees. What kind of Mahapurush is he?" Then Swamiji explained to her the whole situation and said "He is not a Mahapurush of that sort—he is a real Mahapurush (great soul)." On hearing everything the mother of Baburam Maharaj was highly pleased.

\* 'Mahapurush' is sometimes used as an euphemistic expression for referring to Brahmin ghosts who are believed to have their habitation on trees. That is the allusion.

## **TYPES AND WAYS OF DEVOTION**

**KAPILESWAR DAS, M.A.**

[A general view of Hindu devotion in some of its important aspects is summarised below with suitable illustrations.—The Editors.]

**DEVOTION** to Godhead has a method and a process of its own. To invoke the universal Energy as the embodied, to open the heart to be suffused with the lustre of Godhead, to be receptive and responsive to the Vast Immeasurable, to break asunder the knot of attachment and to be one with the Infinite, is not a thing of easy, immediate attainment or glib talk. It implies hard steadfast practice, firmness of volition, clear intellectual grasp and affectional stability. It involves degrees of advancement wherein the Infinite is more and more apprehended. This gradual advancement is recognised by our devotional scriptures, and various stages in it are marked.

From one point of view, as creation itself rests on the three Gunas of Maya—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, devotees are also classified into the three types of Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

The Tamasic, whose minds are thoroughly veiled and bound in the physical and the vital (Annamaya and Pranamaya) sheaths; who identify themselves with their body and senses, and concentrate on the fulfilment of their desires; who forget themselves in their little selves and hanker after low pleasures; and whose attention is fully occupied with the gross, devote themselves to the worship of Yakshas and Rakshasas—gross personifications of bodily and mental appetites, and identify themselves with them.

Higher than them are the Rajasic, who are moved by the Vikshepashakti—the power of movement—of Maya. They go higher to the mental (Manomaya) sheath. They are quick, diligent and practical. They think, feel and act vigorously to achieve wealth, renown and power. They do not shrink from doing what is harmful and unjust to others, provided thereby they get what they seek. They are impatient, ambitious and even cruel. They worship the Pitrish and attain the Pitriloka.

The Sattvic, who go higher to the intellectual (Vijnanamaya) sheath, are reflective and meditative. They not only act but discriminate. They are not satisfied with mere worldly prosperity, but hanker after the calm, the sweet repose of the spiritual realm. They worship the Vedic gods, Vasus, Rudras, Adityas and others—the elemental and the subtle forces of cosmic energy—and attain Devaloka.

Naming in a different way, we can put down these three types as the inferior (Manda), the ordinary (Madhyama) and the superior (Uttama). The inferior, through their devotion to gross forces, identify themselves with them and thus gradually rise in the scale of advancement till they merge in the Hiranyagarbha, the Cosmic Soul, and through Him, in Brahman, the Absolute. But it is a long and painful march with many ups and downs. The 'ordinary' are more advanced than the common

run of mankind and devote themselves to Godhead. But the sense of duality is still in them. God is worshipped as a Being separate, adorable and worthy of service. They attain freedom after death; still their course is not complete. The superior rises above the sense of duality. They have realised the identity with the Absolute. To them God is all; there is nothing beyond Him or without Him. Flooded with the light of this wisdom they become free even in this body, here and now (Jivanmukta).

From another point of view devotees are of two kinds: those, who act desiring fruits of their actions (Sakama) and those whose desires have been fulfilled, who have nothing further to seek, who act so far as it is necessary to maintain the body till it perishes; who are, in short, wise (Niskama or Jnani). The latter are few and far between. Humanity thinks and acts with full motivation, reciprocation and purpose of fulfilment, from the stage of fulfilling gross bodily appetites to the higher stage of fulfilling the intellectual necessity of the search for truth and beauty. Hence human beings mostly are Sakama devotees.

If a man is put into some great danger or he feels intense pain through some disease or he is terrified by some disaster, he forgets his vanity and calls upon God. In ignorance he sleeps the sleep of idleness till Nature administers him the fatal blow. Then he wakes up crying and in sheer necessity of relief, thinks of the Mightier Being and calls upon Him to his rescue. The spirit of give and take, the religion of reward and punishment, acts in this stage fully. He is called the devotee in danger

(Artabhakta). Though he seems to be of the lowest type, still he is better than him who has no devotion at all. It is the beginning and it paves the way to higher realisation. The mythological example of this type is the elephant, who, being attacked by a fierce crocodile in deep water, calls upon Vishnu with all the passionate intensity of suffering and is thereby saved. The story is simple but it has become popular through the association of devotional thought, and Hindu mythology has named God as Gaja-nistarana (Saviour of the elephant).

Those who call upon God to reap the fruits of their actions or to fulfil desires in this Loka or Paraloka, here or hereafter, are called the devotees of desire (Artharathi). The classical examples of this type are Sudama and Sandipani. Sudama, a poor Brahmin, intimately attached and devoted to Lord Krishna, is thrown into extreme poverty. But he is prepared to suffer rather than ask anything from his devoted companion. Instigated one day by his wife, he went to Dwaraka to meet Lord Krishna. He had nothing to take as a present to his divine companion but a handful of parched rice, which his wife tied to the end of his cloth. How great was his embarrassment to offer this insignificant parched rice to the Lord of affluence at Dwaraka! He hid it in shame. But the Lord found it out and forcing it from his hands eagerly ate a few mouthfuls. Sudama spent a few days at Dwaraka and felt himself blessed. He forgot that he had gone there to ask for something. He felt no desire in the presence of Lord Krishna. On his way home he remembered that he had

not asked for anything. He anticipated the frown of his furious wife and was sorely perplexed. When he reached home, what was his surprise to find it changed into a stately mansion fitted up with all sorts of luxuries!

On the other hand Sandipani was a learned Brahmin of Avanti, who imparted all the sciences to Krishna and Balaram in their childhood. After the course of education is completed, it is the Hindu custom to lay some present at the feet of the Guru (Dakshina) as a mark of devotion and obligation. Sandipani, being obliged to accept the present, wanted back his son, who had departed to the realm of death. It is said that Krishna brought the child back. Modern researchers might, perhaps, point out that Sandipani's son, as a child, was kidnapped by some pirates, who infested the Indian waters at that time and Krishna saved him from their clutches after a hard fight. Whatever it be, such is the giving of the Lord to the unselfish, the devoted. He who is immersed in Godhead as the be-all and end-all of existence, surely his necessaries are supplied by the invisible hand; even the highest attainment comes into his grasp. For it is said that when man, awakened to self-consciousness, marches steadily to the goal, caring for nothing and stooping to none, worldly prosperity pursues him like his shadow. But when once he turns back and tries to catch that prosperity, it vanishes.

Next come the devotees of enquiry (Jijnasu). They are tired of the world's way, with full experience of the ephemeral unsubstantiality of the Jagat—this transmigratory existence. They earnestly seek the light of knowledge, the *rationale* of action and

salvation. The classical examples of this type are Arjuna and Uddhava. Arjuna, as is well known, sees on the eve of the great Bharata war that he has to fight with brothers, uncles, grandfathers and Gurus for the sake of a petty kingdom. Is the kingdom permanent? Is life permanent? Is it not preferable to die a beggar rather than kill all of the family and plunge the nearest and dearest into grief and desolation? On one side the Sattvic association of the holy field of Kurukshetra inspired in him the spirit of renunciation; on the other, his Kshatriya nature (Dharma), his inherent tendency, urged him to war. He was at a loss to know what to do. Humbly, very devotedly, he took shelter at the lotus feet of his divine companion for proper guidance. The response, which the world treasures to-day, is the celestial song, the *Gita*—the quintessence of Hindu thought and realisation. Uddhava is another devotee of Mathura, who was sent by Krishna as his messenger to the *Gopis*. His role has become classical in the *Bhagavata*.

Lastly come the devotees of wisdom. They have renounced the fruits of action. They go on the path of uncoiling or involution to the centre. The scriptural examples of this type are Narada, the divine minstrel and the earliest sponsor of the devotional cult; Prahlada, the God-intoxicated young soul, who cared not the angry scowl of his father Hiranya and faced, firm and unseathed, many tribulations and went on chanting the name of Hari; Suka, the son of Vyasa, the born Brahmacharin, who elucidated the Brahma-Vidya in the forests of Naimisha and shed the nectar of

*Bhagavata*; and Sanaka, the great philosopher and logician.

Multifarious are the processes of devotion in relation to different natures. One, concentrating his mind, chants the name of the Lord. Another, controlling his senses, meditates on Him. Still another, taking him to be the only means of salvation, makes obeisance to Him. Our devotional scriptures deal mainly with nine ways in the process of devotion: To hear and chant the Beloved's name and glory, to think of Him in joy and sorrow, to serve at His feet, to worship Him by all means (Upachara), to salute Him in body, mind and speech, to dedicate life and mind at His feet. These are some of the forms of devotional practice.

Who is a devotee? By what indications does mankind know him? How can the devotee himself realise that he is steadily advancing on his path? The *Gita* gives the following expressions of a devoted soul. One who is free from envy towards any being; the well-wisher of all; kind, unattached, selfless, unwavering in joy or sorrow, benevolent; content with what he has; who practises *yoga*; who controls speech and the senses having implicit faith in God; who follows Dharma as *Aurita*; who meditates upon God; who does not make others anxious, nor is made anxious by them; who is free from happiness, sorrow, fear or mental anguish; who is impartial, pure, steady of intellect; who gives up all actions desirous of fruits; and who feels the

same in friendship and enmity, self- elation and humiliation, heat and cold;—he is a true devotee.

From the view-point of degrees of devotional intensity, with which the devotee takes shelter in God, three distinct phases have been marked out.

At the outset devotion is of a mild character. The attitude here to God is—'O Lord, though the difference between you and me is removed by union with Thee, I belong to Thee and not Thou to me. The wave is of the sea, the sea is not of the wave.' In this stage the devotee is supported by the spirit of realisation.

In course of development, the second phase is reached, wherein the devotee, through steadfast practice, takes the mental attitude of "God is mine." He is confident of his claim over God. This attitude of the *Gopis* of Brindavan is beautifully brought out by the famous Poet Surdas in a Hindi Song—' Beloved, knowing me weak, you are leaving me throwing away my hand; but could you go clean from my heart, then I could call you valorous.'

Then comes the last phase of extreme devotion, wherein the Mahavakya—' I am Brahman' (Aham Brahma asmi), ' Everything is Brahman' (Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman) is realised. The devotee is merged in the Absolute. He says " I and this objective Universe are the Svarupa of Vasudeva. Vasudeva is the supreme Lord."

## IN DEFENCE OF RELIGION

BY CHANDRODAYA BHATTACHARYA, M.A.

[The whole ideology of noble impulses, argues Mr. Bhattacharya, is gathered round the concept of '*religion*' in spite of its past and present abuses; hence it covers more than what is implied by morality. Its survival value therefore is not at all in danger.—The Editors.]

IN an article entitled 'Whither India,' Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, 'I have no faith in, or use of, the ways of magic and religion.' In holding this view, he may be taken as the type of an increasing number of cultured and intelligent Indians. Views coming from such quarters deserve one's careful consideration, whether one likes them or not.

It will have to be admitted that for such extreme reaction against religion, the main responsibility lies with many among those who style themselves as religious. Thus in our own country, religion has been made to support the absurd doctrine of human untouchability; and it has been the cause of suicidal quarrels among our various communities. In Europe it once led to crusades and burning at the stakes; and to-day it works against an equitable distribution of wealth in society by preaching superstitious ideas about rank and property. As Karl Marx said, religion is the opiate of the people; the Biblical injunction 'Thou shalt not steal' has in effect come to mean 'Thou shalt not oppose capitalism in its task of exploiting labour.' In the foundation of European imperialism throughout the world, the missionaries of the Christian Church have played no inconsiderable part. Indeed, there are reasons enough why anti-religious cults get such warm reception at every place from Leningrad to Canton.

But it is blindness not to see the civilizing influence which religion has exercised in the history of mankind. Can we ignore the good work done by Buddha, Moses, Christ and Mohammad? Of course, their work has not borne fruit as yet; and human nature has remained much the same since their times. Still it is certain that man would have become much worse than he is but for that divine urge which prompted these great persons to dedicate themselves to the service of their fellow-beings, and to the uphill task of transforming the very core of man's nature.

A similar urge must have swayed even the leaders of Godless communism. Their antipathy to religion is only a reaction to the antagonism of the Christian Church to communistic ideas in general. Without the hypothesis of an active moral factor, it is difficult to understand why the son of a princely father should chafe at the heartless apathy of the vested interests towards the grinding poverty of the toiling masses. The moment you describe one set of conduct as selfish and wicked in comparison with another, you have a moral judgment; and you act on moral principles, not on those of mere scientific economics, the arithmetic of supply and demand.

It may be said that resentment at oppression and injustice is a vital impulse and does not depend on mora-

lity. This is true, to a certain extent; probably the moral urge is also congenital. But the trouble is that, besides the moral urge, there are in our nature selfish propensities as well. And the question rises: Which of these, the self-regarding or the altruistic, should receive our approval in an actual case of conflict between the two?

Marx has indeed tried to base the superiority of the communistic ideal on non-moral grounds. He has attempted to make out that the history of the world points towards a gradual democratization of power, a communistic state. The pursuit of the socialistic ideal is simply helping the course of history. It is in our own interest that we should help it. For those who would obstruct its advent would be crushed and brushed aside by the forward revolutions of the wheel of progress.

But a bare inference that history points towards a certain end need not make it worthy of man's conscious pursuit. For the trend of history is not righteous all through. Supposing that statistics suggest (as indeed seems to be the case) that the coloured races of the world are daily becoming weaker and poorer, should it be the duty of every one to hasten this process? Then again, at the present moment at least, history does not seem to point to the emergence of the communistic state. On the contrary, dictatorship is the order of the day; and it may not be only of the proletariat. With the progress of science, which is mainly engaged in acquiring power, the power of the dictators or the oligarchies is becoming more and more invincible. And there is no knowing that it will always be used

for the good of all alike. History is full of instances where power acquired in the name of the people was employed otherwise. The need for morality has become all the more urgent, because every day the instruments of destruction at the disposal of the powerful are becoming incredibly formidable. Power unaccompanied by morality is a menace to civilisation.

But all this may be taken to be a defence of morality and not of religion. The value of altruism is vouchsafed by an inner sense of good which every one possesses; no God, religion or magic need be brought for this. The unfortunate association of religion with morality, it may be argued, has been the root of a good deal of mischief. It is high time to separate the one from the other, give morality its due and condemn religion, its mischievous companion.

If, however, we can agree in admitting the value of the moral aspect of religion, we shall not probably find it difficult to agree further in retaining the name 'religion' to signify it. The name may not matter with those who understand. But it matters a lot with the generality of mankind. With most men, the whole ideology of noble impulses is gathered round the concept of 'religion' as its centre. They would cling to superstition, instead of starting on a voyage of moral adventure in a sea of either enthusiastic scepticism or of indifferent agnosticism, with no God, no soul, and no ideal of spiritual progress. At least on practical consideration, it will be wiser to emphasise the moral aspect of all religions, rather than remove them altogether, root and branch.

Besides this, morality is probably intimately associated with a stern sense of justice, a sort of relentless exactness in the execution of duty, which ill agrees with the tender aspect of human nature. An out-and-out moralist is likely to forget that justice should be tempered with mercy, that we are all fallible beings, that even the opponent may be partially in the right. Such a man, in short, may lack the religious virtue of toleration, the absence of which has caused in the world so much hatred, bitterness and bloodshed.

It must, however, be admitted that much blood has been shed in the name of religion too. Has not the Archbishop of Canterbury supported armaments? But this has been in spite of what religion has been preaching. In fact, narrowness of every sort, intellectual or emotional, is against its very spirit. Fanaticism is a common human weakness, not peculiar to those who avow religion; for fanatics can be found even among the critics of religion.

In the encircling gloom of uncertainty and the ever-alluring seduction of our selfish inclination, religion alone holds aloft, for our guidance and encouragement, the banner of noble aspiration. Even Bertrand

Russell, an inveterate scoffer of religion, admits in a way the necessity of the religious ideal when he writes, 'If life is to be fully human, it must serve some end which is impersonal and above mankind, such as God or truth or beauty.' The God he talks of, however, is not the God of religion, the imperious dictator, extraneous to man, but the God consciously created by his own imagination, with the materials supplied by the inspiration of the deepest moments of his life. But can this impersonal end be defined without calling to mind the ideals which the prophets and seers of every religion have tried to practise and preach?

No doubt, the dogmas and rituals of religion may, from time to time, prove inadequate to its needs. It will be the duty and privilege of the new generation, then, to replace them with new ones. And sympathetic criticism of the existing order may be a necessary preliminary to this task of re-creation. But its wholesale condemnation is likely to prove unnecessarily destructive and productive of many an avoidable evil. We should not forget that intolerance, whether orthodox or heterodox, is a great defect of character and an obstacle in the path of progress.

## HAVE RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS THROUGH THE DIVINE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes on the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

I

ALL should think of themselves as parts of an infinite Cosmic Existence. If we find this too hard, we need

not follow the path of the formless. We can also follow the path of the devotee, taking up some holy form. For many people the path of the

formless is too difficult. Taking high flights in imagination does not mean anything. Mere soaring has no practical value, and the out-and-out Dualist who has realized something is far better than the intellectual Monist who just soars in his vague speculations, but never realizes anything.

Ordinarily, in all our human relations, we commit the mistake that we wish to take up direct connections with others. We ourselves are short-lived as bubbles, and we try to come into touch with others just like us. Two bubbles drifting on the ocean just come close to each other through the action of the waves; but they think there should be some direct connection between them and commit the mistake of their life. The same action that has brought them together will one day tear them apart, never to meet again. And this always means untold misery and will always happen again so long as we, human fools, try to come in touch with another bubble, instead of thinking of the ocean alone and being in more intimate touch with all through the ocean, without really being in touch with anyone. All bubbles burst sooner or later. So there can be no stability in any bubble-relation. We should do away with vague romance and childish dreams and see things as they are. We should cease to be emotional cowards covering the rotting carcase with fragrant flowers and going in for all sorts of absurd make-believe.

## II

In worldly life the Infinite has no place. We are so self-centred and so absurdly bent on our bubble-relations that we just push It aside and cling

to falsehood with desperate doggedness. For all forms of spiritual practice the most important thing we need is a correct and dispassionate outlook about ourselves and others; for then alone is it possible for us to have a definite goal without constantly being tossed about on the waves of our irrational and body-bound emotions and impulses.

Really speaking, as bodies we are nothing. And so long as we believe and feel ourselves to be bodies only, the question of spiritual life does not arise at all. Then drink and be merry. But this is not the truth. This world is not the only place for our existence. Therefore it becomes incumbent on us to revise this body-idea about ourselves and others. If it is found to be wrong, then our whole attitude towards life will have to be changed.

## III

In all the different schools of Hindu philosophy, and especially in the Advaita school, we find the conception of the Atman as a spiritual entity that is not dependent on anything and that is not created and does not create. God, as Creator, is not the highest in any of our schools of thought. All schools hold that the mind is matter and that the soul is separate from, and independent of, the mind, although associated with it in some of its moods.

We must begin somewhere. There is the ladder, and each one of us must find out first where he actually stands, not where his thoughts soar when he happens to be in a good mood, for it is from there that he must proceed. His spiritual life can only be begun from that point, never from any higher point. We must

know where we stand and where to begin, and then proceed.

Monism, no doubt, may serve as the background for all, but Monism cannot be reached without passing through the different intermediate stages. One in a million, perhaps, can take up the Monistic path from the very beginning. "Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the unmanifest, for the goal of the unmanifest is very hard to reach for embodied beings," says the Bhagavad-Gita. A good Dualist is infinitely better than an intellectual Monist who, at the same time, is nothing but an out-and-out Dualist in daily life. Never deceive yourself on that point. And then the Gita goes on, "But those who worship Me, resigning all actions to Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single-minded Yoga, for these whose mind is set on Me, verily I become ere long the saviour out of the ocean of mortal existence."

In the West people try to detach creation from destruction, the God of creation from the God of destruction, and try to stress creation and preservation only. It is very wrong to make such an attempt at detaching these three aspects, which are eternally inseparable. If your God creates at all, it is He, too, who preserves, and He again who destroys. A synthetic view is very necessary for the devotee if he wishes to progress. The devotee who only wants the God of creation or preservation is a pleasure-seeker, but no devotee. What he really wants is worldly pleasure, infinitely prolonged and made safe against all misfortunes.

We with our inordinate clinging to life and its phenomena are mortally

afraid of the destructive aspect of God. We must go beyond the creative aspect and beyond the aspect of preservation as well as that of destruction if we wish to find peace and attain to illumination.

#### IV

Once one Swami was asked by one of his students, "But, Swami, what do you mean by telling us to control the senses! When senses are fully controlled, then what is left of life?" The Swami had been talking of the necessity of sense-control. Yes, if you take that to be life, then what is left indeed!

"Brahman is that out of which all this comes into being, in which it lives and to which it goes back after dissolution."

Death is quite as real as life. Destruction is quite as real as creation. Why not face both? Why stress creation, why love creation if you do not care to have destruction also? Why cling to life if you do not welcome death also? Either have no attachment to the phenomenon or take both gladly.

"Do not court death; neither court life." This is the proper attitude for the real seeker after Truth. That is the real spiritual attitude. By merely ending life, we do not attain anything great. By clinging to life we remain the slaves of life. So both attitudes are wrong and should be got rid of.

Really if we die, and die we must, let us at least not die as miserable slaves bound to "Woman and Gold." Let us die as free men. Let us die heroically, not as cowards constantly afraid of this phenomenon. Let us have attained fearlessness in every respect before we die. Let us become

men before we die. Let us face death with a smiling countenance. Before we die we should have thrown overboard all these petty attachments of ours and realized our true being.

"Happiness and misery come by turns," say our Scriptures. Creation and destruction come by turns. If you take one side of a certain pair of opposites, you must take the other side also. There is no such thing as just getting one. One always comes after the other. Pain comes after pleasure. Destruction comes after creation. They will go round like a wheel without ever coming to any stop so long as we do not transcend this phenomenon and refuse to take either pleasure or pain.

All these relations of ours are like so many will-o'-the-wisps leading us away from the true path until we sink in the morass of our desires and lose our manhood. There is no such thing as a direct relation between one bubble and another.

## V

Misery can only come by a false conception of ourselves, by clinging to our bodies and personalities, by trying to possess shadows. Sometimes we find the shadow to be a shadow, and then comes depression and misery. We can always trace all our miseries back to our false conceptions of ourselves and of others. So long as we think of ourselves as men and women, there cannot be any truth.

"Blessed is misery to those who come to have a higher ideal of life." (Swami Vivekananda).

Forgetting our true nature, we very often dream false dreams, but false dreams can never bring truth, and very often when we find that the

dream has been false, we become broken-hearted, because we even cling to our false conceptions. Then comes the dreadful lightning-flash of Truth and brings us untold misery.

You have had so many false dreams in your past life. You have so often taken the mirage to be real. Do you not see how often you have been living in a fool's paradise, clinging to some other false personality, making emotional castles in the air, dreaming of a love which does not exist? Very often as an effect of disillusionment, life all of a sudden becomes a void. We have to remove this void.

The Western ideal of life is a false dream. Sooner or later disillusionment will come for the West, and then the awakening will be dreadful.

## VI

It should be our goal in life to rid ourselves of this false dream-personality and to regain our soul. There is not a single human being that belongs to us. Father, mother, brother, sister, wife, child—none of them is ours, and they can never be ours. But generally we must get no end of kicks and blows in the course of our different lives to learn this lesson. And then one day we realize that God alone can be relied upon, and, what is more, that we are He.

The first step is to attain a right conception of ourselves. Then only the question of spiritual life arises.

We must only have relationship with others through the Divine, and only because we want to have direct relations with others, all this misery comes again and again.

It is our task to adjust all our relations in such a manner that no rela-

tions, except those through the Divine, are left in our life. Otherwise misery and misfortune will come again and again, and we shall not be able to grow, because we cannot grow so long as we do not let go our hold on falsehood. Never cling to any other hu-

man being. Neither make him your slave, nor ever become his. Gain your own eternal freedom and help him in gaining his. This is the only possible attitude in spiritual life. There is no other. You cannot have the cake and eat it too.

### A PLEDGE

BY LELAND J. BERRY

I will be true, I will be pure,  
I will observe Thy Holy Law,  
And whilst life doth in me endure  
I will be blind to Thee no more !

I shall have faith, I shall have strength  
To bear me kindly o'er Life's ways,  
That when I reach Thy throne at length  
I shall be worthy of Thy praise !

### YOGA AND REALITY

BY SWAMI NISSREYASANANDA

[The following is the second article in the series promised by the Swami. The first has appeared in the December issue of *The Vedanta Kesari*.—The Editors.]

THERE are numerous works dealing with Yoga. Each treats the subject in its own way. Some have stressed physical discipline more, while others have emphasised control of thoughts and emotions. To mention a few names, we have works on Hatha Yoga, Patanjali's Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Asparsa Yoga and so on. A comparative study of the reactions which these Yogas create in the aspirant will be made in subsequent articles. It will also be shown in due course how these have a bearing on the attainment of the Highest Truth.

To the ordinary man Yoga appears to be a system which teaches difficult

postures and breathing exercises. He believes that they will lead one to the acquisition of various powers like clairvoyance, or in advanced stages, to the capacity to lie buried under the earth for a number of days. Such an opinion is not entirely without foundation. For if one wanders over the length and breadth of our vast country, one can surely meet many a misguided but sincere man, whose motives and practices tend to create or confirm such an opinion. But if one carefully studies books like the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, devoted specially to an exposition of postures and breath control, one's estimate is bound to undergo a transformation.

Every one understands that the various medicines described in medical books are not meant to be indiscriminately taken in, *one after another*, by *each* patient. All medicines have got curative value. Yet, unless each patient is separately and fully examined, the employment of *any* medicine may lead to fatal consequences. This truth holds good of Hatha Yoga too. Each Hatha Yogic exercise has got its own value; but unless the psycho-physical mechanism of each aspirant is carefully studied by a *competent* teacher the number and order of exercises for *serious practice* cannot be *safely* fixed. In fact, the Hatha Yoga text stresses the need for a teacher in every one of its chapters. While telling us that Pranayama, when properly done, can eradicate diseases, it hastens to warn us that an improper practice generates diseases as well. "Lions, elephants and tigers are controlled by and by. So also with regard to breath. Its control is to be accomplished by slow degrees. Otherwise, *i.e.*, if done with haste or too much force, there is the danger of its *killing the practitioner* himself."<sup>1</sup> The example of medicines is quite appropriate. For some of the exercises are meant to cure actual diseases troubling the aspirant. For instance, it is laid down that if there is an excess of fat or phlegm in the body, six special cleaning processes (Kriyas) have to be gone through. The warning immediately follows, that persons not suffering from these de-

fects should not perform them.<sup>2</sup> It is common experience to find most aspirants often overcome by a kind of depression characterised by sleepiness and lassitude. Certain exercises are calculated to get rid of this obstacle.<sup>3</sup>

All the methods of Hatha Yoga, however, are meant mainly for achieving success in Raja Yoga. Those, therefore, who are ignorant of Yoga will attain only limited progress. Such is the opinion of Atmarama Swami himself,<sup>4</sup> who "out of compassion" has composed Hatha Yoga Pradipika "to dispel the darkness arising from the multitude of views which make it impossible for people to know Raja Yoga aright."<sup>5</sup>

What, then, is Raja Yoga? Says Atmarama Swami himself: "Raja Yoga, Samadhi, Unmani, Manonmani" and a number of other terms including "Sunya, Asunya, Amanaska, Adwaita, Jivanmukti and Turiya" are "all synonymous."<sup>6</sup> What a fine specimen of the harmonising attitude, which realises the Goal to be the same, though Shastras which lay down the paths to It can be many —each having its own concepts and terms!

It is Patanjali's Darsana which deals elaborately with Samadhi, the steps leading to it and the various planes in which it is to be used. Yoga, according to it, covers the entire field of mind-control and can even be

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* II: 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* II: 55.

<sup>4</sup> सर्वंहठलशोपाया राजयोगस्यसिद्धये ।  
राजयोगमजानन्तः केवलं हठक्रमिणः ।  
एतानभ्यसिनो मन्ये प्रयासफलवर्जितात् ।

*Ibid.* IV: 102, 78.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* I: 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* IV: 3-4.

१. यथा मिहो गजो व्याधी भवेद्दश्यः शनैः शनैः  
तथैव सेवितो वायुरन्यथा हस्ति भाथकम् ॥  
प्राणायामादियुक्तेन सर्वरोगक्षयो भवेत् ।  
अयुक्ताभ्यासयोगेन सर्वरोगसमुद्भवः ॥

H. Y. Pradipika, II: 15-16.

called Samadhi,<sup>7</sup> in the widest sense. There are two distinct types of Samadhi, Samprajnata and Asamprajnata. While practising the former the mind is made to take up various aspects of Nature, Prakriti, for communion. The result is the perception of corresponding relative "truths." Deities or even elements like earth are taken up in the very early stages. Gradually the power of communion is applied, in an ascending scale of subtlety, to grasp the truth regarding Tanmatras and the thinking principle, then the triple qualities (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas) and lastly the Self, the subtlest of all. In the Asamprajnata, there is no "substratum for meditation." Strictly speaking, it is not a "meditation;" it is a "control" in which all functions of the mind, including "knowledge," are subjugated. What is left is the mere momentum of previous functions. This is "seedless" Samadhi, the "highest" stage of Patanjali's Yoga.

Why should Samadhi be practised at all? The answer is that we can thereby *prevent the pain that can be avoided, or has not yet come.*<sup>8</sup> Equipped with a body, we find ourselves in a world where many kinds of pain afflict us. Death in a way marks the end of these afflictions. But the cessation can only be temporary. For if we have not "realised" what the Soul is, the chain of thoughts, desires, body, pain and death will reappear. There are of course moments when pleasing things happen to us in our earthly life. But as no experience

through the senses is *lasting*, this pleasure cannot be continued as much as we want. Its absence, or what is worse, its replacement by a positive evil, will surely follow. The man of discrimination realises this truth and classifies every experience in life as pain.<sup>9</sup> "The wise man (Yogin) is somewhat like the eye-ball. The minute spider's web, when put into the eye, causes pain by its touch; but it does not cause any sensation when put on other members of the body. Similarly pains involved in pleasure afflict the Yogin alone, who is somewhat like the eyeball in sensitiveness, and not any other person." Thus it is that the Yogin finding himself and all other creatures being carried away by this beginningless 'stream of Pain,' comes to seek refuge in Right Knowledge, which alone is capable of ending all pain.<sup>10</sup>

Analysis, however, reveals the bright side of life as well. For Prakriti or Basic Matter, standing over against Soul is found after all to be a kind nurse, prepared voluntarily to disappear from Soul's view, relinquishing her ministrations, when her whole programme is gone through. This programme consists in showing the Soul "experience" and "liberation." All cognitions, pleasant and painful, constitute "experience." "Liberation" is effected when Soul is realised as having been distinct from Matter all along, and as standing to gain nothing from a display of "experience."<sup>11</sup> The "seedless" Samadhi, from one standpoint, is the cessation of Matter's dance before the adept. From another standpoint it is

7. योगः समाधिः । स च सार्वभौमचित्तस्य धर्मः।  
Vyasa Bhashya, I: 1.

8. Yoga Sutra, II: 16.

9. *Ibid.* II: 15.

10. *Ibid.* II: 15. Vyasa Bhashya.

11. Cf. Vyasa Bhashya, II: 18.

the "establishment" of the adept's Soul in Its own Reality. Birth, death, bondage, liberation, aspiration, achievement, all belong to aspects of Eternal Matter. The Soul never touched them, never wanted them, never gave them up, never noticed them and never shall notice. This is the "highest truth" from the stand-point of Patanjali's Yoga. This position looks like an echo of Mandukya Karika II: 32, which says that in reality there is no dissolution, no birth, none in bondage, none aspiring for wisdom, no seeker after liberation and none liberated. But there is a great difference in the implications of that Karika, as we shall in due course explain.

Though Yoga is described as Samadhi, it can also be viewed as a progressive ascent in *discrimination*. For the means for avoiding pain is, in Yoga Sutra II: 26, clearly declared to be the attainment of "unflinching discrimination."<sup>12</sup> Even to concentrate the mind on anything one should discriminate between the relevant thought and irrelevant thought. In other words, it is a subtle power of discrimination which notices and prevents mind-wandering, and enables the selected object alone to be repeatedly presented before the mind. Again, when keen concentration is acquired, it is to be applied gradually in subtler planes (तत्त्वं भूमिषु विनियोगः). This requires discriminative skill. When powers begin to come, they can be warded off only by using discrimination like a keen-

edged sword. This last stage of discrimination expands into a novel kind of Samadhi, called Dharma-Megha. To the adept, at this stage, there is no attraction even in Right Knowledge. He desires to gain nothing from it, rather he becomes indifferent to it. For he is the Soul eternally perfect. This Samadhi is thus absolute discriminative wisdom.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, Yoga, Samadhi and discrimination are identical.

In this scheme of "studying" Reality, what is the place of God and devotion? God, according to Patanjali, is only a special Soul, untouched by the afflictions which are the lot of other Souls. He is unaffected by Time and has been the Teacher of even ancient teachers. By surrender to Him, Samadhi and discrimination can be attained. This is an alternative step to postures and other steps of Yoga. God, however, is no creator of the world.

In Bhagavatam and other books we find this position "improved upon." The different categories of Matter, Souls and God are retained, and Samadhi and discrimination everywhere stressed. But God is declared to be the Creator, Preserver, Teacher and Destroyer. Devotion to Him is supreme, Samadhi and discrimination being merely auxiliary. The Gita contains a wider conception of Yoga; each of its chapters being styled "Yoga." Arjuna's despondency is also a Yoga in the series. In the Gita, meditation, Bhakti, discrimination, self-surrender, all get adequate emphasis and are made to converge upon Realisation as the One Goal. Realising God, the Supreme Reality,

<sup>12</sup> Discrimination, according to Patanjali, leads up to the realisation that there are innumerable *Atmans*, and over against them, one *Prakriti*, consisting thereby two distinct categories of Ultimate Reality.

<sup>13</sup> Footnote 12 applies to this statement also.

there is no more return to pain or rebirth.

When such is the vast field covered by Yoga, how is it that we find *Mandukya Karikas* speaking of "Yogis" as "inferior," as people who "see fear where there is no reason for fear"? What Yogi is meant? When all the Yogas reviewed above enable the aspirant to remove his physical defects and to develop the "highest"

knowledge or discrimination, or to set at naught rebirth itself, what further stage is there yet to attain? The question becomes more interesting as the *Karikas* too have a Yoga of their own, called *Asparya Yoga*. How does this differ from other Yogas and in what way does this eliminate fear altogether?

This problem will be dealt with in another article.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYAGISANANDA

[The name of Sage Narada is very familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature. With this instalment it is complete.—The Editors.]

### SUTRAS 77 TO 84

सुखदुःखेच्छालाभादित्यके काले प्रतीक्षमाणे  
क्षणार्थमपि व्यर्थं न नेयम् ॥ ७७ ॥

सुखदुःखेच्छालाभादित्यके free from pleasure and pain, desire and gain, etc., काले time प्रतीक्षमाणे when waits upon him in expectancy क्षणार्थम् अपि even half a moment व्यर्थम् uselessly न नेयम् should not be spent.

77. Time becoming available to him because of his freedom from pleasure and pain, desire and gain, etc., it behoves him not to waste even half a minute.

*Note.—1. Time becoming available etc.—*Ordinarily people have no time to think about anything except their own welfare. They are interested in the world only in so far as the world caters to their own needs and not

otherwise. The devotee on the other hand is free from all worldly anxieties, having once for all resigned everything to the Lord. He is never more concerned about himself. He has, therefore, plenty of time to think about the welfare of the world, and to serve it to the best of his knowledge and capacity.

2. *Behoves him not to waste etc.—*Every moment spent on oneself is indeed a waste, because it does not help one to realise one's life's goal. Only time spent in spiritual practices which would kill the ego, can be said to be usefully spent. Even symbolic, ritualistic worship prescribed by the scriptures are helpful to the spiritual aspirant only in early stages of his ascent; they should not be continued longer than necessary. When love matures, God is seen manifest everywhere and in everybody, and devotion, therefore, must express itself

in the service not merely of an image but also the God in all. Thus the Agni Purana says: "The God of the ritualists is in Fire, that of the mystics in the heart, that of people of low intellect in images, but to the realised man God is everywhere." (Compare also Bhagavata III: 29.21 to 25, and II: 2.45 to 47). If, at all, ritualistic practices are continued, it should be for setting an example to others.

अहिंसा सत्यशौचदयस्तिक्षयादि चारित्र्याणि  
परिपालनीयानि ॥ ७८ ॥

अहिंसा सत्यशौचदयस्तिक्षयादि non-violence, truth, purity, compassion, faith in higher spiritual realities and the like, चारित्र्याणि virtues, परिपालनीयानि should be cultivated and preserved.

78. He should cultivate and preserve virtues such as non-violence, truth, purity, compassion, faith in higher spiritual realities and the like.

*Note.—1. Cultivate and preserve etc.*—Unlike the ritualistic practices and ceremonials which have to be transcended at one time or another, the virtues like non-violence, have to be cultivated and preserved. The time never comes when one could outgrow or transcend them. These are intrinsic elements of spiritual life in all stages. They are found in their perfection in the realised man. No doubt the latter has no necessity to put forth any effort to cultivate or preserve them, because they have become natural to him. All ideas about a Bhakta or a Jivanmukta being above virtue and vice, is meant only to show his freedom from the injunctions of the Scriptures. It cannot be taken to refer to the possibility or

probability of a spiritual man living a vicious life. The stage of devotion or spirituality reached by him makes it impossible for him to go wrong. The ego which is the source of all vice is absent in him, and there is no reason, therefore, why he should be immoral. The Yogis call this stage of spiritual life 'Dharma Megha' or the cloud of virtue, meaning thereby that we can expect nothing but the highest virtue from one who has reached that stage. There is no necessity for him, either to give up these virtues, because they are not in any way inconsistent with the highest realisation. Moreover, in his infinite love for all, he cannot fail to set an example to the masses who look up to him for guidance. If he does not set the standard of Dharma, the world would not have any other standard to go by. Therefore, although he himself is no more under any necessity to follow these virtues, he has to preserve them in the interests of the world. By example as well as precept, he has to guide the world through the paths of virtue to the highest realisation which he himself has reached. This is the only duty which engages the realised man, and all his time is to be spent only on this. (Compare, Bhagavad Gita III: 25).

*2. Non-violence, truth, etc.*—These are virtues insisted upon by all Yogas and they are not peculiar to Bhakti Yoga only. All these represent various aspects of the conquest of ego. These virtues are more internal than external and may have negative and positive manifestations.

सर्वदा सर्वभावेन भगवानेव निश्चिन्तैः  
भजनीयः ॥ ७९ ॥

सर्वदा always सर्वमावेन in every aspect of life निश्चिन्तैः by people free from all cares and worries, भगवान् एव the lord of all blessed qualities alone, भजनीयः is to be worshipped.

79. It is the Lord alone, who is the repository of all the blessed qualities, that is to be worshipped always by people, free from all cares and worries, in every aspect of their life.

*Note.—1. The Lord etc.*—Only the Saguna Brahman is fit to be worshipped. He is called Bhagavan, because He is the possessor of various blessed qualities, powers and excellences. It is only by cultivating the various virtues that one can show his admiration and love to this infinite repository of all blessed qualities. Therefore, imitation being the best expression of admiration, cultivation of these blessed qualities becomes a necessary act of worship. Since a devotee's whole life is an offering unto Him, every act and thought must be an expression of these virtues. It behoves the devotee, therefore, not only to worship God thus in every act of his life, but guide others also to do the same.

स कीर्त्यमानः श्रीप्रभेवाविभेवन्यनुभावयति  
भक्तान् ॥ ८० ॥

कीर्त्यमानः being thus glorified सः he श्रीप्रभु soon आविभवति manifests himself एव indeed भक्तान् the devotees अनुभावयति makes realise.

80. Being thus glorified, the Lord manifests himself and blesses his devotees with realisation.

*Note.—*When the divine qualities, which are known as the Daivi Sampat, are thus perfectly cultivated and preserved, and expressed in every act and moment of life, they do proclaim the glory of the Lord present in every heart. This is the Kirtana referred to in this Sutra, and not mere verbal praise or glorification. As the qualities can never be separated from the substance, a devotee feels the presence of the Lord who is the repository of these qualities, not only in their own hearts but everywhere. In fact, the Lord makes Himself manifest to His devotees only through these qualities. In Himself He is free from all these qualities and is beyond the grasp of word and thought. A devotee does the best service to the world in helping it to realise and manifest these blessed qualities. This is the highest worship that he can offer to God.

तिसल्यस्य भक्तिरेवगरीयसी भक्तिरेवगरीयसी ॥८१॥

तिसल्यस्य of the absolute, eternal truth भक्तिः love एव only गरीयसी is greater than anything else.

81. Only love of the absolute, eternal Truth is the greatest. This love, indeed, is the greatest.

*Note.—*The various forms of God which devotees love and worship as their Ishtadevatas in the early stages of spiritual ascent, and the various forms which appear to the mystic are not the highest Reality, and so long as devotion is confined to these, one has not reached the highest stage of love. Like all other names and forms which constitute this Universe, they also are only relatively true. At best, they may be helpful in the various stages of ascent, but the highest is not reach-

ed until the Absolute which is beyond all name and form, is realised in its own essence. This Absolute persists as the unchanging Reality, beyond all time, space and causation, in all the three stages of waking, dream and sleep, behind the manifestation of all the three Gunas, as the essence of the Triputi of subject, object and knowledge. In fact, it is the Unity that underlies all diversities. When one transcends the dual, relative consciousness, one merges oneself in, and becomes one with, the Absolute. He reaches the highest stage of realisation which is known as Para Bhakti, which is referred to at the beginning of the treatise, in Sutras 2 and 3. This is the culmination of all spiritual practices and the goal of all life. There is nothing higher than this.

गुणमाहात्म्यासक्ति-रूपासक्ति-स्मरणासक्ति-दास्यासक्ति-सख्यासक्ति - वात्सल्यतासक्ति-कान्तासक्ति - आत्मनिवेदनासक्ति - तन्मयासक्ति-परमविरहासक्ति-रूपा एकधा अपि एकादशधा भवति ॥ ८२ ॥

82. The highest Bhakti, though in itself one, may manifest itself in the following eleven different forms:

- (1) Love of glorification of the Lord's blessed qualities;
- (2) Love of his enchanting beauty;
- (3) Love of worship;
- (4) Love of constant remembrance;
- (5) Love of service;
- (6) Love of Him as a friend;
- (7) Love of Him as a son;
- (8) Love of Him as a wife;

- (9) Love of self-surrender to Him;
- (10) Love of complete absorption in Him;
- (11) Love of the pain of separation from Him.

*Note.*—The various forms in which highest realisation may manifest itself are described above. It does not mean that love can manifest itself only in these eleven forms. Indeed, infinite are the number of forms in which love manifests itself in different devotees, accounts of which are available in various Puranas and in the lives of saints. It is not the manifestation that matters, but the truth behind the manifestation. The same Bhakta may manifest one or many or all of these at different times and on different occasions. Thus we find all these manifestations in the Life of Sri Ramakrishna.

इयेवं वदन्ति जनजल्पनिर्भयाः एकमताः कुमार-व्यास-शुक-शाण्डिल्य-गर्ग-विष्णु-कौण्डिन्य-शोशो-द्वावा-रुणि-वलि-हनुम-द्विभीषणादयो भक्त्याचार्याः ॥ ८३ ॥

83. Thus unanimously declare the teachers of Bhakti without being in the least afraid of public criticism,—the great teachers like Kumara, Vyasa, Suka, Sandilya, Garga, Vishnu, Kaundinya, Sesa, Uddhava, Aruni, Bali, Hanuman, Vibhishana and others.

*Note.*—However much the teachers may differ from one another, there is unanimity of opinion with regard to the essentials. Narada has given in his work only an account of the essentials of Bhakti Yoga, leaving us to a study of the lives of the various

Bhaktas for information with regard to details. However free we are to adopt any of these various details, we cannot afford to neglect or go against the essential teachings summarised by Narada in this work. In the acceptance or rejection of the various details, we should be guided by the principles innunciated here.

य इदं नारदप्रोक्तं शिवानुशासनं विश्वसिति श्रूदते स भक्तिमान् भवति सः प्रेष्टं लभते सः प्रेष्टं लभते शक्ति ॥ ८४ ॥

84. Whosoever amongst us believes in this Gospel of Narada, and has faith in his teachings, becomes a lover of God, and attains the highest beatitude and goal of life.

*Note.—1. Whosoever.....* This shows that Bhakti is open to all, irrespective of differences in caste, creed, colour, sex, age, capacities or tendencies.

*2. Believes and has faith etc.—* This shows what Narada requires as the

barest minimum to make one an Adhikari for Bhakti Yoga. This barest minimum consists only in belief, in the efficacy of the Sastra and Faith. By the way, he makes a difference between belief and faith. One may begin with merely believing in the words of the Gospel, but before long this belief must develop into faith or Shraddha; while belief consists only in a kind of cognition, Shraddha is more dynamic and implies also readiness to put the teachings into practice and eagerness to know the truth for oneself. Only, then, love arises in the heart, and leads on the aspirant to the highest goal of life, to that which he holds dearest. Thus we have here an account of the various functions of the mind, intellect, emotion and will, co-operating with one another to raise the aspirant step by step to the highest realisation, in which he passes beyond the limitations of the mind and becomes one with the Absolute bliss itself, from which there is no possibility of a further fall.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Mysticism of Time in Rig Veda:** By Dr. Mohan Singh. Published by Atma Ram & Sons, Publishers, Anarkali, Lahore. Pages 64.

This small book is an attempt to view the Vedas in a new light. What the author has aimed at may best be described in his own words thus: "In every essay in this book I have emphasized the need of realising that the Vedic consciousness is eternal, that the Vedas as consciousness is not any one thing but is basically three-fold (or nine-fold, eighteen-fold) and that the law of correspondences obtaining in the three, nine, fourteen and eighteen is shown in the Vedas, at work in the universe, through (1) simile or analogy, (2) metaphor or identification, (3) the use of figures of speech relating to one sense-organ for those

of another, of words of one phase of life and branch of knowledge for words of another phase and branch."

We have quoted this sentence both to show the author's purpose in writing this book as also his way of presenting his ideas. We tried our best to comprehend its central ideas written with so much erudition and insight, but the manner of presentation followed in it is so obscure and confusing that its purport remains a sealed book to us. One gets the idea that Dr. Singh has some highly illuminating and original ideas about the Vedas supported by a vast collection of materials, but has forgotten that a book is not merely for self-expression but to have one's writing read and understood by others. We make this criticism only because we feel that if Dr. Singh bears

this in mind he can do much to enlighten the Hindu public on many of the obscure problems connected with the Vedas.

*Sri Lakshminarasimhastava: By K. V. Rangacharya. (In Sanskrit). Published by A. Srinivasaraghavan, M.A., Price, as. 4. Pages 82.*

This book, which is apparently a hymn addressed to the Deity as Lakshminarasimha, is a brief exposition of the Visishtadvaita system of Vedanta together with its criticism of rival systems. It is written in beautiful verses employing all the various metres one comes across in classical Sanskrit poetry. The author deserves much credit for weaving devotion and philosophy into this very readable hymn in Sanskrit. A Tamil comment is also attached to the book.

*The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge: A Critical Study of Some Problems of Logic and Metaphysics. By S. C. Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D., Premchand and Roychand Scholar (Cal.), Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University. Published by the Calcutta University, 1939. Pages 421. Price, Rs. 6.*

The book under review is an important contribution to a comparative study of Ancient Hindu Theory of knowledge. Though it modestly calls itself only a Nyaya Theory of Knowledge, the book really covers much larger ground inasmuch as it attempts a critical estimate of the Nyaya position from comparative viewpoint.

The work is divided into five Books, preceded by a short introduction. The first Book which deals with the "Method of Valid Knowledge" consists of four chapters on the nature and form of knowledge, valid knowledge and its method (prama and pramana), factors of valid knowledge and the test of truth and error. The second Book treats of "Perception as a Method of Knowledge" and comprises five chapters on definition of perception, psychology of perception, ordinary perception and its objects, three modes of ordinary perception and extraordinary perception. The next Book deals with the "Theory of Inference," and consists of four chapters on the nature of inference, the ground of inference, classification and logical forms of inference and fallacies. Upamana or

comparison forms the topic of Book four, which has two chapters on the nature and forms of Upamana and Upamana as an independent source of knowledge. The next three chapters of this Book deal with Sabda or testimony and the last chapter with other sources of knowledge such as Arthapatti, Abhava and Smriti. The whole Book ends with a summary and general estimate of Nyaya epistemology.

Both the old and the new schools of Nyaya receive fair treatment. The exposition is both historical, critical as well as comparative. The Nyaya Sutras and their older commentaries and later expositions have been laid under contribution as is evidenced by the copious reference given in the footnote. The plan of exposition is as follows: First the various aspects of the Nyaya theory is explained on the basis of recognised authorities, and then the same is compared with the corresponding treatment of the same topic in other systems of Indian thought. This is followed by a discussion of the Indian views from the standpoint of Western philosophers, ancient as well as modern. The author takes pains to point out the points of agreement as well as difference between the Indian and Western systems, taking care to give due weight to the originality of the Indian systems wherever such is really due. He has even ventured on some original suggestions here and there in modification of Indian views in the light of Western thought, which perhaps may not be quite acceptable to all. But this has made the book more valuable to modern students who are not bound down by the weight of mere tradition. In the same way he has also pointed out how the Western systems can profit by modifying their views in the light that comes from the East.

On the perusal of the book, one is surprised to find how the human mind has had to face the same problems everywhere and how, in its attempts to penetrate the mystery of the world, problems have received more or less identical treatment and solution at the hands of thinkers of different climes and cultures. There is no problem nor its solution found in Indian philosophy that does not find its parallel in some other system of human thought somewhere else in the world. The study

of Nyaya epistemology is profitable not only to academic circles interested only in the intellectual solution of problems. Nyaya is no mere intellectual speculation with no reference to life. The ultimate end of Nyaya is also Mukti *i.e.*, absolute freedom from evil as well as the troubles and turmoils of the world. It is only from this standpoint that Nyaya undertakes its enquiry at all. Even the Vedanta philoso-

phy owes much to Nyaya philosophers for its logic and dialectics in later stages of development. It is therefore highly advisable for modern students of Vedanta and spiritual culture to have some grounding in Nyaya.

The author deserves thanks from all modern students of Indian culture and philosophy for his lucid exposition of this difficult subject.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Dedication Celebration of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York

The formal dedication of the new house and chapel of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, at 17 East Ninety-fourth Street, was held during the three days from October 25th to October 27th, 1939. Guests of Swami Nikhilananda for this occasion were Swami Paramananda, of Boston, Swami Akhilananda, of Providence, and Swami Viswananda of Chicago.

The ceremonies commenced with Puja and Viraja Homa performed by the four Swamis on Wednesday morning, October 25th. A portion of the Chandi was also read. This was followed, the same evening, by a meeting in the chapel, addressed by Swami Paramananda, Swami Akhilananda, and Swami Nikhilananda. The central altar, with its picture of Sri Ramakrishna, was decorated with a profusion of lilies, roses, chrysanthemums, and other flowers sent by friends and devotees. Swami Nikhilananda opened the service with a dedication address which is printed below. He followed his address by the reading of the message from Swami Virajananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, and congratulatory telegrams from Swami Ashokananda of San Francisco, Swami Prabhavananda of Hollywood, Swami Devatmananda of Portland, and Swami Vividishaananda of Seattle.

The subject of Swami Paramananda's lecture was "The Power of Prayer," and he emphasized the need of self-forgetfulness and a prayerful attitude, if we would lead a meaningful life. Swami Akhilananda spoke on "Yoga and Western psychology," and pointed out how Vedanta philosophy could help Western psycholo-

gists to build up a more rounded view of human life and behaviour. In conclusion, Swami Nikhilananda spoke a few words in appreciation of the co-operation and support he had received from the Swamis and his friends alike. The large congregation, numbering over 120 persons, also enjoyed hearing Srimati Gayatri Devi, assistant to Swami Paramananda in Boston, sing several Hindu devotional songs and play on the Esraj. A copy of Swami Nikhilananda's Dedication Address was presented to everyone present.

The next evening was devoted to a dinner, held according to the custom of the Center at Schrafft's Restaurant. Over one hundred persons were present. Mr. Ralph S. Robbius, President of the Center, introduced the speakers. Miss Josephine MacLeod, Swami Paramananda, Swami Viswananda, Srimati Gayatri Devi, and Swami Akhilananda addressed the guests, paying tribute to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and to the work which Swami Nikhilananda has been carrying on in their name. The latter replied, once more expressing his gratitude to all who had helped to make the celebration a worthy one, and said that the Center provided a meeting place for all dedicated to the end that spirituality might prevail in a world of confusion. After the speeches, moving pictures of a pilgrimage made by H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore to the sacred Lake Mansarovar and Mt. Kailas were shown. Everyone considered this dinner the most successful yet given by the Center.

On Friday evening, Swami Viswananda and Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke at the chapel to a large gathering. The Swami

chose "The Mission of Vedanta" as his subject, and emphasized some of the cardinal points of that ancient philosophy. Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke on "The Ideal of Hindu Womanhood," and after paying tribute to the Holy Mother, pointed out the need for preserving the Indian woman's outstanding virtues—meekness, purity, and endurance—while she takes her place in the modern world. Again this evening, the congregation enjoyed her playing and singing. Among her selections was a portion of the Ramuan Kirtan. Swami Nikhilananda brought the dedication celebration to a close, again thanking both the speakers and the friends of the Center, and expressed the fervent prayer that this Center might always remain faithful to the lofty spiritual ideals of its two great patron saints.

All who attended the three-days' festivities were impressed by the spirit of harmony that prevailed throughout. The success of the celebration was in large part a tribute to the leadership of Swami Nikhilananda, who for the past seven years has been working tirelessly to build up a real Center in New York for all seekers of Truth. With the acquisition and dedication of this new house, and its beautiful chapel, one of his cherished dreams has become a reality.

*The following is the dedication address delivered by Swami Nikhilananda on the occasion:—*

Scarcely more than a century ago, a God-man was born among the Hindus, in whom were re-embodied all the varied spiritual experiences of that ancient people. Millions now regard Sri Ramakrishna as the lineal descendant of Krishna, Buddha, and Christ. The fifty-one years of his life he dedicated to the proposition that God is the ultimate Reality, and that the human soul is, in its true nature, divine. Through the spiritual medium of the New World, Swami Vivekananda spread the message of his Master to the four corners of the earth. Our Center is so named that it may draw inspiration from these two hallowed souls.

Today the world is engaged in a mighty war. Beneath the facile pretexts of the surface one can discern a life and death struggle between the forces of spirit and matter. It is a war testing whether God

and His ways can long endure. The forces of evil are indeed strong; but the forces of good are active as well. The ideal of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center is in harmony with the latter, and it provides a meeting-place for men and women of all races and creeds who have dedicated their lives to the end that spirituality may prevail.

We are assembled this evening to dedicate this place. But neither by ceremonies nor by any words can it be so dedicated. The two great souls whose names the Center bears have already consecrated it with their silent blessing. Its friends and workers, through their prayer and sacrifice, have made it already holy. Mere formalities have no power to add or detract.

In the inexorable flux of time, names and forms rise up and perish again. Bricks and stones are of no importance. Even what we do here will soon be forgotten. But what we think here will have lasting significance; for thought is the true measure of things. Therefore we are overwhelmed with a sense of tremendous responsibility in the task ahead, conscious as we are of our defects and shortcomings. We need all the humility, all the reverence in the world in this hour of self-dedication. We need the blessings of God and the prayers and goodwill of men. For today, in a true sense, we dedicate ourselves, with the two great souls we venerate as our witness, to the noble ideal of attaining liberation in God, and helping others to attain such liberation. We dedicate ourselves to the complete spiritualization of life, that we may see God in everything, and that we may establish a relationship of peace and harmony with all dedicated to the same goal.

May the great teachers of humanity, past and present, give us strength and vision to cast out all bigotry and narrowness from our minds, all selfishness and impurity from our endeavors. By our devotion to Truth, may we so transform our lives that man shall know that God never leaves the world without His living witness.

Today our hearts are united in the prayer that we may bring fearlessness to this fear-stricken world, beget love in a hate-ridden society, and behold, even in the gloom of suffering and death, the shining face of Truth.

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## VALUE OF TIME

[These verses deprecate idleness and extol life actively spent in doing good to others.]

पुण्यं सत्ववतां श्रुतं मतिभतां शीतं च विद्यावतां  
सर्वे भाग्यवतां सुखं शमवतां नैव क्वचिद् दुर्लभम् ।  
दुष्प्रापस्तु समस्तवस्तुवस्ते: स्वल्पांशकोऽप्याशुषः  
तथस्य क्षयमेति निष्फलतया शोच्याय तस्मै नमः ॥ १ ॥

ऐश्वर्यमाश्र्येसुखावतंसं लावण्यलद्भीतिलकं वपुश्च ।  
क्षणेन यात्येव कृतान्तवर्त्मे कर्मोभिनिर्माणहृतं नराणाम् ॥ २ ॥

तज्जाङ्गं तदस्त्रशल्यशक्तं न्यस्तं सुहृदेतसि  
प्राज्ञैस्तद्विष्टिं विचारसमयैर्वैफल्यमेवाशुषः ।  
यद्वैराग्यविवेकशून्यमनसामेरे पशूनां यथा  
यान्त्यायान्ति च चक्रनेभित्तिनैर्निर्लक्षणानां क्षणम् ॥ ३ ॥

यद् भुज्यते परथनेन निपीयते यत्  
सौख्याशया विषयर्कर्त्त्वं विग्रहते यत् ।  
तस्याविचाररमणीयसुखोदशस्य  
प्राणावसानपणदाहण एव पाकः ॥ ४ ॥

क्षणक्षयिणि कायेऽस्मिन्नलक्ष्यपरिणाभिनि ।  
परोपकारसारैव जन्मयात्रा शरीरिणाम् ॥ ५ ॥

निस्सारविरसः कायः सापायोऽयं क्षणक्षयी ।  
परोपकारलेशेन याति संसारसारताम् ॥ ६ ॥

अहो बतास्मिन् निस्सारे संसारे सारस्पिणः  
आयन्ते मणयः केचित् परचिन्तापरायणः ॥ ७ ॥

Religious merit is not hard to be got by one who has a good mind; learning is not difficult to be acquired by an intelligent man; noble behaviour would easily come to a learned man; happiness is never away from one who has self-control; and for one who is lucky nothing is impossible or unattainable. But none can add to his destined span of life even by a minute fraction. Granted time, everything is attainable, and he who wastes such a precious gift deserves what else but pity? (1). Man may possess wealth crowned by wonderful happiness; he may have an enviable physique adorned with every charm; but all these, caught up in the current of Karma—momentum of his previous deeds,—run down the stream of destruction (2).

In the consideration of thoughtful and discriminating men, it is stupidity, it is a rankling pain inflicted on friends, it is sheer waste of life, that the moments of these graceless men bereft of dispassion and discrimination—even as it is the case of brutes—approach from the bosom of futurity and recede into the shade of the past like a whirling wheel (3).

What a man eats, drinks and enjoys with the property earned by others, what a man enjoys through the senses with abandon, in the hope of happiness, the result of all such superficial delights is deadly and terrible (4).

When this body, in its evolution, is decaying momentarily without being noticed, one can find value for it only by making it an instrument for doing good to others (5). Hollow, insipid, destructible, ephemeral, is this body. Nevertheless it can be made the most valuable possession in the world by doing good to others with it (6). It is a wonder, in this worthless world of ours, some jewels are born as the very embodiment of all worth—men who are ever anxious for the welfare of others (7).

—Avadanakalpalata.

## KARMA YOGA AS A METHOD OF ACHIEVING OBJECTIVITY

### I

KARMA YOGA is a recognised Path of religion. Every religion has a philosophy of work created and controlled by the tenets it holds regarding God, universe and man. The most authoritative Hindu view of the philosophy

of work is beautifully set forth in the divine scripture, the Bhagavad Gita. The central theme of this great work is what is popularly known as “disinterested activity” or “motiveless work” typified in the oft-quoted verse conveying the sense: “You are

divinely appointed only to discharge your duty; the results are not your concern. Never hold yourself to be the cause of the results of your deeds; yet beware never sloth overtake you." This grand teaching of the Gita, true and at the same time scientific, has rightly won for it enormous popularity at this age of activism and scientific convictions. It seems that modern psychology has stumbled upon a similar principle when it has analysed human purpose into two distinct kinds and termed the one as egocentricity and the other as objectivity, the latter having a good deal of resemblance with the ideal of Anasaktiyoga of the Gita. Here we shall now study the two doctrines at some length.

The claim of educational psychology was more or less echoed by Swami Vivekananda when he remarked: "Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the viewpoint of health also." As we proceed in our study of the nature of objectivity this will become sufficiently clear. To one who analyses human behaviour under various conditions the characteristics of these two opposed tendencies make themselves evident. In the egocentric type of character the self is the centre of all reference, and environment and the interest it affords are not at all of a dominating kind. Whenever a person is bent on doing something if he questions himself whether he is enlisting himself in the service of the object or he is pressing the object to his service, making himself his chief purpose, he will be able to perceive whether the action is egocentric or objective. The egocentric or self-

centered man beguiles himself into the belief that the rest of existence is for his sake. He makes himself the standard of the whole universe. His attention will be deflected from the objective achievement and turned towards his own sweet self. But it should be noted that no action is entirely egocentric or cent percent objective, because man is part of his environment. We, however, use the terms observing the prevailing element in the action.

Man's destiny is almost exclusively shaped by the attitude he has developed towards life from the very childhood. The tendency for egocentric or objective development is visible even in a little child; and in course of time the one is suppressed and the other is fostered as a result of interaction with the situations. The creative impulse being quickest in an active child it is capable of forgetting itself in any objective achievement as long as it could sustain its interest in it. Any encouragement given to the child by way of approving or praising the perfection and excellence of its achievement directly acts as a spur to better achievement, and the child would apply itself in making something better next time, not out of any desire for self-aggrandisement but by the sheer delight of producing something. In this instance the objective orientation of character is quite patent. On the other hand if the little performer is praised, and not his achievement, the reaction, we are informed with sufficient data, would take a different turn. The ego is dilated by praise, a sense of superiority is awakened in the mind. The child is rendered incapable of taking the same objective

delight in his handiwork. It seeks satisfaction progressively in utilising the achievement for furthering its own superiority or ego-ideal. This must be the reason why all religions equally emphasise the elimination of the ego element from all acts of worship either by participation or annihilation in the Divine—the final cause and explanation of all cosmic activity.

## II

Psychologists tell us that the direction in which the character of a child develops is determined by the common events of life. Once the ego-ideal is set up, certain definite behaviour patterns are bound to follow, which make it almost impossible to achieve objectivity in conduct, and gradually a cocoon of self-interest is built around the person. The more unobjective and self-centred the actions are, the more keenly one will pursue the path of personal success; and the more the self is emphasised, the more the chances of fear, disappointment, anxiety and impatience and likelihood of failure dogging the steps of life. "It is work done as a free-will offering to humanity and to Nature that does not bring any attachment," said Swami Vivekananda. The clinging to the ego-ideal is the root of all bondage and suffering. The ego-ideal leads man by the leash and forges fatal bondage—fatal because it is almost an unconscious process.

Psychology traces the root of egocentricity to pampering or intimidation or hardening in childhood, of which every child will have had its own share. It is early training that fixes the groove through which the whole successive developments follow.

It is therefore necessary to know beforehand what type of upbringing promotes objectivity and what are the defects which hinder its growth. Observing the child again we find that the child that is helped out of every difficulty by an elderly person becomes egocentric and cowardly; because such a pampered child comes to look up to elders for help at every step. He who considers this world as a gymnasium for mental and physical development alone can become strong. Such a person will not detest, or retreat from, any hardship and become powerless to endure hunger or pain or other hardships. The man who always harps upon his ego is happy and satisfied only as long as his will is not hampered or thwarted and the feeling of superiority and sense of triumph give him the egoistic delight of a miniature ruler. But with the reversal of the position due to some situation a biting sense of inferiority throws the mind into a chaos, and then follows a desperate attempt to restore the ego into a superior position. Fanaticism, theft, dreaminess and other traits are the result of such an attempt. On the other hand when a youngster persistently demands external aid, if his parents or educators pay no heed to it, he will get hardened. When help is denied one has naturally to fall back completely upon one's own resources. In the case of a boy he may seek outside what is denied at home, and look upon his own educators as obstacles in the achievement of his desired ends. If however by his own natural resources he is able to achieve what he wants, the independence thus evinced will be pregnant with hostility and defiance. Pride and defiance are

always signs of egocentricity and want of objectivity. Such a training may give much dash and courage and make daring record-breakers and ring-leaders, but they will have at bottom distrust for persons who are not completely under them. They become too faint-hearted to be on human terms with others. Extreme self-dependence, suspicion that others are antagonistic even when they are not, and a certain desire to outwit and exploit others will naturally characterise the growth of such hardened youngsters.

### III

Besides the pampered and daring type, where egocentricity is the natural fate, there is another type, the intimidated. In the desire to surmount difficulties some are neither helped by others nor have the power to succeed of their own accord. The feeling of utter helplessness looms large before their minds. The struggle for life ceases and the pleasures and activities of life lose all charm; and contentment in one's own sphere becomes ingrained upon the minds of such. The ego-centric striving for superiority and fear of inferiority get deeply impressed upon the mind. The feelings of incapacity, helplessness and loss of initiative become the inner law of such intimidated children as they grow up.

These are the defects mainly brought about by egocentricity. As a result of such repeated reference to the ego there would be utter want of courage, technically called 'tension capacity.' Whenever a person has to accomplish a hard task or get through an unpleasant experience the man of greater tension capacity takes up the

difficult part of the work first and feels himself free and easy. It is objectivity that increases tension capacity. The man who does the duty without the egocentric reference never postpones and is never a victim of the feeling "I am incapable of surmounting this difficulty." He is master of himself, and the quality of Dama or perfect control of all his energies will mark him specially. A child or an animal has the least tension capacity; hunger and anger shake them to the very root. But a mature man, a developed mind, sets the face against any hardship. Therefore to have an effective and successful life correct objectivity and tension capacity are very essential.

### IV

What is the method to achieve true objectivity? A great Yogi advises: "We should work through concentration. In such concentration in action there is no consciousness of the lower ego present..... When one works with concentration, losing all consciousness of oneself the work that is done would be infinitely better, and this everyone might have experienced.... If the painter losing the consciousness of his ego becomes completely immersed in his painting, he would be able to produce masterpieces .... Such a performance of work brings only good to the world, no evil can come out of it."

One who is objectively minded engages himself absorbedly in the perfecting of the means he has chosen for attaining his end. The saintly Pavahari Baba of Gazipore advised Swami Vivekananda "to love and take care of the means as if it were the end." The egocentric person

wastes all his energy in weighing and wistfully scanning the end itself without paying sufficient attention to the means. Failure and success directly bring repercussions on his ego. It is said that the Baba was observed to score a vessel as if it were the most important work to do. It is clear from this what an amount of objectivity will be required to do even the most insignificant act minutely and carefully, as such acts are not likely to give room to swell one's ego. Persons who pay the least heed to the ego alone are capable of doing such perfect work. The more objective a man is, the greater calm he enjoys, the more patient he will be. He would attend more deliberately and thoroughly to the particular requirements of his work. Success cannot elude such a perfect worker; but even if failure overtakes him he is not unhinged by it. Thwarting of will, desertions of friends, loss of confidence, depression in business or other displeasing events would only egg him on to apply himself with greater objectivity to the works that await him. Though he may feel the legitimate delight of having achieved success, he is not puffed up by a false sense of superiority which would be the case in respect of an egocentric personality. In his case, as the great poet Kalidasa said, 'effort is only successively renovated by the achievement of each triumph—*Klesah phalena hi punar navatam vidhatte*.' He has learned the secret of work—to work like a master and not as a slave. He is as much for the world as the world is for him.

## V

We have now observed how motiveless work urged by the path of Karma

Yoga, or objective work as set forth by educational psychology, is valuable not only as a religious path but also as a way of conducting one's daily life cheerfully and efficiently. A word is required here in explanation of the real nature of disinterested work. Does it mean negation of all sensibility to the work one takes in hand? Is it to work without any feeling? Without any aim or plan? Certainly that is not the secret of Karma Yoga or crux of objectivity. Entrenched in one's own ego one may pose the question: Should an employee have no care for his remuneration or a trader no eye upon profit? Is it possible for one, when one is conscious that it is his labour that produces a particular commodity, to forget the very result of his labour? These and similar other questions are idle. Without aim or plan no work is done; nor the thought of the issue negatives the objectivity and disinterestedness that one has to cultivate in one's works. The actual question is: Does the person utilise the action for his vanity and recognition? The more is his ego the rallying point of his activities the more he is deflected from the objective standard. A good artist enjoying his great reputation, by constantly reverting to it, hardly develops his artistic powers. The man who bogs himself under the thick mist of egocentric behaviour is an abject slave of himself; he cancels his own growth, development and happiness; on the other hand he who cares not for the self being "up" enjoys life, takes the full share of freedom, happiness and cheerfulness, and looks upon reverses in right sportsman-like spirit.

Modern psychology, while emphasising the great value of objectivity, has not chalked out a definite method for attaining objectivity; whereas Karma Yoga or the path of work insisted in religion has enunciated two methods. The one is by referring all activity to the indwelling Divine in Whom the purified ego is sublimated. The ego-ideal is broken or never allowed to crystallise, because an overwhelming sense of the Divine is constantly kept before the dedicated mind in all activities. The ego subordinates itself utterly to the Divine and considers itself only an instrument in the hands of a greater Power. Whatever might happen is directly referred to that Power. The interest of the ego and all its feelings of exaltation, superiority and the like

are sunk in the continuous contemplation of the Other. The other method advocated by religion is to substitute gradually the Cosmic Ego in the place of the narrow ego-ideal, by spiritual discipline and cultivation of the mind. The scope of action thereby is expanded and work is intensified by univiversal motives, and all purely egoistic strivings are neglected, forgotten and eliminated. Of course these two views urged by religion take us beyond the limited scope of experimental psychology and behaviouristic explanation of conduct; yet at the same time they reinforce and establish a genuine basis for the attainment of true objectivity or right spirit of a Karma Yogi, leading to the goal of life here and hereafter.

## ADVAITA AND MORALITY—OR ADVAITIC TRANSFORMATION OF WILL

BY SURENDRANATH MITRA, M.A., B.Sc., L.T.

[Mr. Surendranath Mitra is not new to the pages of *The Vedanta Kesari*. Some of his thought-provoking articles have appeared in our back volumes. Though his main field of activity is education, his interest in philosophy is deep and practical, and his grasp of its problems clear and firm. What is presented here is a searching and critical study of the motive of philanthropy from the background of Advaitic metaphysics.—The Editors.]

### I

THE post-Buddhistic religions of India, including those of Bhakti (love of Personal God) have been, as a rule, dominated too much by the idea that the cycle of repeated births and deaths (Samsara) is the greatest disvalue, and consequently a sense of freedom from this, associated with the personal experience of a corres-

ponding mystic bliss, is the Supreme valuation of life. The value of the love of humanity was subordinate to this desire for Mukti, with very rare exceptions. The Bodhisattva ideal of life of the Mahayana Buddhism, and the ideal of active service of man in Sikhism—not only in its developed form as found in the life and teachings of Guru Govind Singh, but also in its original form assumed in those

of Guru Nanak<sup>1</sup>—were two such exceptions. Even in those Bhakti-religions, such as the Bengal Vaishnavism of the Sri Chaitanya school, in which the ideals of Mukti are not only ignored but even strongly denounced, equally with worldly enjoyment,<sup>2</sup> the rank and file have been obsessed by the fear of repeated births and consequently dominated by the eager desire to get rid of them; while the elite have raised the ideal of a mystic personal communion with their God of pure love far “above” the ideal of active service of humanity. Love of man has been reduced by them to a prayer and a pious wish for the good of mankind simultaneously with the negative morality of not doing anybody any harm, the active service, if any, consisting in efforts at converting willing souls to one’s own religious cult and doctrines.

The ideal of love of humanity with an emphasis on active service, refusing to look at the outward signs of faith, and ignoring even the absence

<sup>1</sup> “There can be no love of God without active service. We should do active service within the world, if we want a place in heaven....We must practise righteousness, if we want salvation.”—Guru Nanak’s Religion in his own words, by Tej Singh; *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 230.

“Death is the privilege of brave men provided they die for an approved cause.”—*Ibid*, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> “भुक्तिमुक्तिस्पृहा यावत् पिशाची हृदि वर्तते । तावःभक्तिफलस्यात् कथमभ्युदयो भवेत् ॥”

—Rupa Goswami; *Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu*, 1.2.15.

—How can the love of God fructify in the heart, so long as the devilish desires for Mukti and worldly enjoyment reside in it?

of faith, has appeared as the highest value in the modern age in the West and has subsequently also extended its sway over modern India.<sup>3</sup> No religion that fails to generate faith in this ideal as the highest value has the least chance of survival in this age. For, as Hoffding remarks, “the gods die for want of nourishment, and nourishment comes from living spiritual need” (*Philosophy of Religion*, p. 244). No philosophy—not even the most perfect—can be a substitute for religion. For, the special function of religion is the generation, nourishment and propagation of faith, which is but an object of philosophical investigation. When a religion fails to found itself on the value ap-

<sup>3</sup> Even in the West, this ideal is of recent growth, and that outside church-Christianity. It was unknown to St. Augustine, and dismissed by Thomas Aquinas. Even towards the end of the last century, when St. George Mivart attempted to incorporate it in Christianity as an apologist of Catholicism, the Church answered the noble attempt “by putting his works on the register of forbidden books” (Hoffding’s *Philosophy of Religion*; note 109, p. 391). Mivart was afterwards excommunicated for the fault “that he never made an act of complete intellectual submission to the Church and never gave up his private judgment, but that on the contrary he presumed to teach the Church instead of being willing to be instructed by her” (*Ibid*, note 120, p. 392).

Even now the philanthropy of a Christian Church is not actuated by “the spirit of the good Samaritan, but generally speaking, of the propagandist; at any rate, she very often demands the outward signs of faith, by which means she frequently excludes the honest and encourages hypocrites. However admirable her devotion and organisation, yet she is too apt to sin against the holy spirit of brotherly love” (Hoffding’s *Philosophy of Religion*, Art. 120, p. 348).

propriate to an age, it comes to be looked upon with indifference, and may, under circumstances, be even looked down upon with disgust, derision and disdain. This has happened to such an extent in our age that even the very name of religion is to many as the red rag to the bull. Hence we find that the modern movement of Bolshevism, in spite of its new dogmatism and its professed antagonism to "religion," is agitating the minds of vigorous youths of all cultured lands in its favour, and even drawing a genuine and warm admiration from mature, thoughtful minds that are habitually averse to dogmas in this age of reason. By many it is regarded as a fitting substitute for religion, which they believe or make believe has paid its debt to time, while by some it is even apotheosised to the status of religion. The secret lies in the fact that it has proved itself potent, at least in the land of its birth, in the teeth of opposition of the rest of the world, to assert the value of man above every other value—while the wickedness of capitalism, nationalism and imperialism, and the hypocritical cant of internationalism, together with the unabated, if not the growing, helplessness of man in their hands, lie so nakedly exposed. Rabindranath, in his letters from Russia, has gone so far as to characterise Bolshevism as a genuine religion. In his recent writings, such as in his *Religion of Man*, he has been constantly reiterating that active service of humanity out of disinterested love is the essence of religion, even in spite of atheistic professions. Clear enough indication of the *zeitgeist*!

## II

Love of others, and of humanity in particular, especially in the sense of active service, follows immediately from the fundamental faith of Advaitism in the absolute identity of all souls. No dualistic theology or ethics can supply any rational basis of morality by satisfactorily answering the question, "Why should I love or do good to others?" Advaitism alone can do it by saying, "Because my self is identical with those of others, and, therefore, my interests with those of others." This has been well recognised by Schopenhauer in his *Basis of Morality*, and Deussen in his *System of the Vedanta*.<sup>4</sup> The clearer

<sup>4</sup> Deussen, however, complains that though this consequence has been drawn in the *Bhagavad Gita*, we do not find it drawn "in Shankara, and indeed nowhere to the extent we should have expected" (*System of the Vedanta*, Johnston's translation, p. 404; p. 477, art. 42; and p. 59). The Complaint is, generally speaking, true; and, with respect to Shankara, the absence of the conclusion is the only logical consequence of his recognition of individual *Samsara-Mukti* as to the sole independent value. But, at least in one place, in the *Bhagavata*, with which Deussen does not seem to have been acquainted, the conclusion has been drawn as clearly and fully as we would expect. There, the *Bhagavata* describes the three-fold discipline in Advaitism, *viz.*, *Bhavadvaitam* (the identity of all phenomena with their transcendental ground), *Kriyadvaitam* (the performance of all actions as offerings to the Brahman), and *Dravyadvaitam* (the identity of one's desires and interests with those of others). It describes the third part of this discipline as follows: "The identification of one's own interests and desires with the interests and desires of the wife, the sons, the daughters, other relatives, and all other embodied beings is called *Dravyadvaitam*."—

"आत्मजायासुतादीनामन्येण सर्वदेहिनाम् ।  
यत् स्वार्थकामयोरैकम् द्रव्याद्वृत्तं तदुच्यते ॥"  
*Bhagavata*; 7, 15, 65.

the recognition of one's own self as the self of others, the more unselfish and more vigorous the morality; and hence, the most unselfish and vigorous morality, that is humanly possible, is that of the Jeevanmukta—the liberated soul in embodied existence. Thus it is not Sankara's doctrine of incompatibility of Self-knowledge with will, but the opposite doctrine of their synchronal combination (ज्ञानकर्मसमुच्चयवाद), that is the only logical conclusion, for practical religion, from the metaphysics of Sankara. A failure to understand this is one of the chief reasons that have led even a philosopher like Aurobindo Ghosh to condemn Sankara's "Mayavada."

Moreover, the concept of Ananda as an essential characteristic (Sva rupa-Lakshana) of Brahman is identical with that of Supreme Love (*Samkshepa-Shariraka*, I: 25; and *Panchadashi*, I: 8, 9, 11; VI: 285; VIII: 56-57; XII: 69). The most unselfish love of man arising out of a dissolving of the individual in the selves of others is a deduction from this. Transcendental Knowledge and Transcendental Love are, no doubt identical. But their phenomenal manifestations in the mind are certainly different. Brahman expresses Itself as the Knowledge-aspect in the life of a Jeevanmukta as a never-failing apprehension अवबोध of the identity of his self with the selves of others, in spite of the apparent duality of experience, just as an astronomer never fails to apprehend the rotation and revolution of the earth in spite of its apparent stationariness. So Brahman—if It at all be the transcendental principle of love—is bound to express Itself, in the

Jeevanmukta's life, in the love-aspect also. It has been clearly admitted in the *Panchadashi*, too, (6.285), that the highest culmination of Self-knowledge consists in the identification of others as one's own self, with the same firmness as is evident in the identification of the body as the self. But why should the expression of this identification stop short at a mere abstention from doing anybody any harm, and at a mere wish, blessing and prayer for the welfare of all (*Panchadashi*, IV: 54, 56; XIII: 102; XV: 35), active service for others being considered as an immaterial superfluity (*Panchadashi*, VII: 256, 257)? Advaitism does not make the preposterous claim that all duality of experience is annihilated in the life of the Jeevanmukta; it is only the duality involved in the competition of his egoistic desires against those of others that is extinguished—while the duality created by Ishvara, for His cosmic justice and love, persists, till Jeevanmukta is disembodied (i.e., attains Videha-Kaivalya, *Panchadashi*, IV: 39; VII: 83). Hence the active duties of a Jeevanmuktha for the destruction of evils and the preservation and promotion of the good of others still remain, so long as he lives.

### III

It is true that morality implies will, and, hence, an effort. But effort is not necessarily absent, always, even in the life of a Jeevanmukta. For, a trace of ignorance (Avidya-Lesha) necessarily persists along with his bodily existence; only it cannot overpower his Self-knowledge (Vidya); on the other hand, his self-knowledge invariably overpowers any errors that may occasionally arise (*Panchadashi*, VI: 239). Effort

in the sense of a struggle of the true nature of the self against the false one, represented by immoral and selfish impulses, superimposed by ignorance, is only reduced to the minimum possible in the life of a Jeevanmukta. Apart from this, he, too, has his limitation of powers (*Panchadashi*, IX: 108-110). And when these are challenged by the confronting evils of the world, effort is invoked in proportion to the difficulty of the situation. The situation may be so trying and challenging as to strike him with sadness or grief or to make him indignant, and even exasperated, as illustrated occasionally in the lives of Rama and Krishna of Lakshmana and Arjuna, of Vishvamitra and Vasishtha. Such emotions or sentiments lend a delicate and desirable charm to the characters of the Jeevanmuktas—and even to those of the incarnations of God (Avatars). They go to show that these persons are not insipid, degenerate beings, callous to the sufferings, injustices, and oppressions in the world, but that they have feeling hearts with a highly developed moral sensitiveness wedded to a remarkable self-control. Hence, referring to Rama, the *Yogavasistha* generalises : "Just as the great fundamental elements are not affected except on the occasion of a new creation, or on that of a cosmic dissolution of the world, so, too, great purified souls are not moved to anger and sadness by a trifling cause."

<sup>5</sup> "कोपं विषादकलनं वितरं च हृष्णं  
नालेन कारणवशेन वहन्ति सन्तः ।  
सर्वेण संहृतिजवेन विना जगत्यां  
भूतानि भूय न महान्ति विकारवन्ति ॥ ८ ॥"  
(*Vairagya Prakarana* ; 5, 15).

The same Scripture describes Vishvamitra as "gifted with the genius of Brahmanhood as well as with the great spiritedness of Kshatriyahood."<sup>6</sup>

#### IV

We should not leave the treatment of this Advaitic intuition of morality without some discussion of a problem raised by Deussen in this connection. The great philosopher rightly observes that in this intuition of Advaitic morality the natural boundaries of the Ego are enlarged, "as the result of a new mode of knowledge (Vidya)," and the not-Ego is drawn within the sphere of the Ego. He is also convinced that this is "the deepest explanation of the essence of morality which can be reached with the plummet of the intellect." But, then, he remarks, "Yet even this remains inadequate; for in truth morality lies beyond Egotism," and, hence, to his thinking it is the Christian view that is more profound; for "Christianity demands not, like Brahmanism, Self-knowledge (destruction of error). This is verified by experience and felt by us to be the highest attainable; but regarded from the standpoint of the intellect, it remains something unintelligible, unthinkable, impossible" (*System of the Vedanta*, p. 404).

Our view in this connection, however, is as follows: Morality cannot be independently proved to be beyond the province of egotism, although it is certainly felt by naive experience to be so. Hence in this case the deliverance of experience cannot be called

<sup>6</sup> "ब्राह्मेण तेजसकान्तं शास्त्रेण च महौजसा ॥ ८ ॥"  
(*Vairagya Prakarana* ; 6, 17).

a verification; and experience may also be illusory. Deussen takes the datum for the verification—he puts the cart before the horse. Every mental process, intellectual, affective or volitional, lies within the province of the Ego, whether the ego-sense is consciously pronounced in it or not. Not only morality and love, but even some modes of knowledge have in them a tendency to transcend their phenomenal nature and to touch, as it were, the infinite beyond. How the tendency is present in one mode of knowledge, strictly within the province of intellect, apparently fettered by causality, has been shown by us in an ontological discussion of the nature of Being, in the article, "Advaitism Rationalised," published in *The Vedanta Kesari* for July, 1935, on pp. 98-100. The Advaitic apprehension of the identity of the personal self with Brahman is specially characterised by the conviction that every limitation, including that of the Ego, is transcendently *non est*, being a superimposition of nescience. So, when this apprehension underlies the morality of the Advaitist, the same conviction is carried over with it, and the very principle of expansion in the expanded and expanding Ego is recognised as an *Excelsior*, the transcendental ground and conclusion of which are the absolute negation of the Ego. Surely, the Brahman of Advaitism is not a magnified Ego but its total negation; and the destruction of error, in Advaitism, includes the destruction of egoism. Hence it cannot disturb the self-denial (i.e., the ego-denial) of morality. As a knowledge of optics does not disturb the aesthetic appreciation of the grandurs of the crimson-coloured

and oval-shaped rising or setting sun, or a knowledge of dietetics does not disturb the enjoyment of a hearty meal, so also the understanding of the rational basis of morality cannot disturb the genuine character of morality. The understanding of the rational basis meets the demand of unity of personality, in the sense that the personality does not remain split up into disconnected compartments.

## V

Religion in India has been able to raise the concept of Jnana from the stage of dependence on Scriptural instructions and the teachings of the Guru or the teacher (परोक्ष-ज्ञान) to a stage of full independence, where it proceeds spontaneously and independently from the essential nature of the Self (अपरोक्ष-ज्ञान). It has also been able to raise the idea of Bhakti (Love) from a similar level of dependence (वैष्णी भक्ति) to a level of complete freedom flowing spontaneously from the inner essence of the self (रागभक्ति). But it has almost wholly failed, ever since the time of Buddha, to free the concept of duties from the Scriptural and conventional bindings and elevate it to a similar status of independence in which they flow directly as free activities from the categorical imperatives of the self-denying love from within. The development of such an ideal is a pressing spiritual need of our time. Such a concept of duty was, however, present in pre-Buddhistic India, as is evident from the *Gita* ideal of *Loka-Sangraha* (the welfare of the world), which, according to Sri Krishna, should be followed even by the enlightened (Vidvans) (*Gita* I: 3.25.).

This ideal of the love of all beings, when its essential implications are laid bare distinctly enough, is bound to revolutionise, as it should, the traditional ideal of Jeevanmukti, transforming its individualistic character into a universalistic one. It is generally believed that the birth in which Jeevanmukti is attained is, as a rule, the last one. But a higher conception of Jeevanmukti is possible, in which the liberated would pass through many births, rendering all possible help to others, till all attain the liberation. We find such a conception of Jeevanmukti in the Bodhisattva ideal of the Mahayana Buddhism. We come across a tendency to such a conception of Jeevanmukti in the *Yogavasishtha Ramayana*. Vasishtha, during the course of his instructions to Rama, states in one place that the great Vyasadeva, who is explicitly characterised as a Jeevanmukta, would pass through eight more births for the welfare of humanity, before he attains Videhamukti (dissolution of individuality in Brahman).<sup>7</sup> Such persons have been called *Adhikarikas* (gifted with special capacity to do good to the world) by Sankara and his traditional followers, and their repeated births have been explained by them as due to some specially meritorious acts or austerities, which had been performed in a state of ignorance and

which began to produce their effect before the dawning of Self-knowledge (*Brahma Sutra*, and Sankara's *Bhashya*, 3.3.32). It follows from this view that the repeated births of the *Adhikarikas* for the active service of humanity, being an effect of a mode of ignorance, is, by implication, if not valueless, at least inferior in value to the absence of such service on the part of the Enlightened, who are not *Adhikarikas*. This, to our mind, is an inverted ordering of the two values. The possibility of *Vidchamukti* only along with the liberation of all (Sarva-Mukti) was also conceived by the famous Shaivite Vedantist, Appayadikshita, although, unfortunately, such a noble conception has hardly been seriously considered, except as an object of speculative interest only—and that too, within the narrow circle of specialists in Philosophy.

## VI

Coming to the modern age we find the late Swami Vivekananda seriously asserting, with his characteristic vigour and an appealing emphasis, his earnest desire to be born millions of times for the service of humanity, especially of the worst and the most hated of sinners and criminals. He also says in one place: "Not one can attain liberty until every being (ant or dog) has liberty. Not one can be happy until all are happy" (*Complete Works*, 1921, Vol. VI, p. 49).<sup>8</sup>

7 "भाव्यं अशाप्यनेनेह ननु वाराष्ट्रं पुनः ।  
भूयोऽपि भारतं नाम सेतिहासं करिष्यति ॥  
कृत्वा वेदविभागं च नीत्वानेनकुलप्रथाम् ।  
ब्रह्मत्वं च तथा कृत्वा भाव्यं वै देहमोक्षणम् ॥  
वीतशोकमयः शान्तनिर्बाणो गतकल्पनाः ।  
जीवन्मुक्तो जितमना व्यासोऽयभिति वर्णितः ॥"  
(*Yogavasishtha Ramayana*; II : 3.28-31).

8 The inertia of the traditional ideal of the half-way house between individual and universal emancipations, however, led him to entertain the possibility of Sri Ramakrishna's entering into *Videha-Mukti* after one more birth. He once remarked: "He (Ramakrishna) said he would come once more with us. Then, I think, he will

The true significance of *Jeevan-mukti* seems, to my mind, to be the highest conceivable perfection of *per-  
embrace Videha-Mukti.*"—(*Fragmentary Notes of class-talks; Works, Part VII, Mayavati Memorial Edition*, p. 400).

According to Swami Saradananda, however, Sri Ramakrishna said, with reference to himself, that he was not destined for Mukti. He, belonging to the State service of the Mother, will have to appear to remove a disturbance wherever in Her State it may ever occur (*Sri Sri Ramakrishna Leela-Prasanga*, in Bengali; *Guru-bhava*, Latter half; 3rd. edition; Chap. IV, p. 205).

sonality in life, i.e., in embodied existence, now and here. A condition of life in which a person can, with equanimity, imagine the absolute dissolution of his individuality in Brahman, while conscious of the fact that there would be other individuals still left in bondage, and, therefore, in need of being helped out of it, is bound to be considered as defective in an age in which love of humanity is genuinely felt to be the highest value and disinterested labours of love for others the very essence of morality.

## BALADEVA'S INTERPRETATION OF THE BRAHMA SUTRAS

BY DEWAN BAHADUR, K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B.A., B.L.

[A short study of Baladeva's philosophy, together with an analysis of the main contents of the Brahma Sutras in the light of his Govinda Bhashya, follows.—The Editors.]

BALADEVA is one of the numerous commentators on the Vedanta Sutras. His commentary is called 'Govinda Bhashya.' He says that Govinda commanded him in a dream to compose it. He attacked ritualism as well as Advaitism. According to him, Vishnu is the Supreme Being. There are five Tattvas or categories only in his scheme. Isvara or God, Jiva or Soul, Prakriti or Matter, Kala or time and Karma or activity. The consciousness of Isvara is infinite, while that of the Jiva is finite, though both are eternal and un-created. Consciousness and self-consciousness will go together, just as luminousness will reveal the form of the luminous entity. Isvara creates the universe. He is immanent in the universe and controls it. He is the cause of our bondage and liberation, because His will leads to such

states in accordance with our Karma. He has many aspects, though He is one and only one. Though He is unmanifest, He manifests Himself to His devotees out of grace. The souls are in bondage because of ignorance of God. Love and knowledge of God lead to the liberation of the soul and the vision of God. Prakriti is in the balanced state of the three Gunas, but it becomes active and creates the diversified universe at the glance of God and according to the will of God. Kala or time is non-intelligent, but is in a state of perpetual motion; it brings about creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. Karma is *Jada*, material. It is beginningless (*anadi*) but can be destroyed.

According to Baladeva, Jiva, Prakriti, Kala and Karma are energised by God. He says that the text that

"Brahman alone exists" merely means that there is no power except that of Brahman. His view is that the Bhagavata was composed by Vyasa as a commentary on the Vedanta Sutras. The Garudapurana expressly says so by affirming thus: "The Sri Bhagavata is an explanation of the Brahma Sutras. It is also the commentary on the Mahabharata. It contains also the commentaries on the Gayatri and the Vedas. The place of Sri Bhagavata among the Puranas is similar to that of the Sama-veda amongst the other Vedas."

In explaining the evolution of ideas in the Vedanta Sutras, Baladeva follows the traditional view. He says that the first chapter shows that all the Vedic texts refer to Brahman (Samanvaya), that the second chapter shows that there is no conflict between the Vedanta Sastra and the other Sastras (Avirodha), that the third chapter describes the means (Sadhana) of the attainment of Brahman, and that the fourth chapter describes the result (Phala) of the attainment of Brahman. He follows the traditional view about the Anubandha-chatushtaya (the relation subsisting between the aspirant, the theme and the end), and says that the Adhikari (qualified aspirant) should be a person having Sama (tranquility), Dama (sense-control) Sraddha (active faith), Nishkamakarma (dedicated work) and Satsanga (holy company); that the Sambandha or relation is the description of Brahman by the Sastra (scripture); that the Vishaya or subject-matter is the Supreme Purusha who is Sacchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), is infinite and who possesses innumerable auspicious qualities; and

that the Prayojana (purpose or end) is the realisation of God by the removal of all wrong notions which prevent such realisation. He is also in accord with other commentators in saying that every topic has five parts, viz., (1) Vishaya (thesis), (2) Samsaya (doubt), (3) Purvapaksha (prior view), (4) Sangati (consistency of one topic with another) and Siddhanta (conclusive view). Sangati is of three kinds, i.e., (1) Sastra-sangati, i.e., consistency with the whole text (Sastra), (2) Adhyaya-sangati, i.e., consistency with the whole chapter (Adhyaya) and (3) Pada-sangati; i.e., consistency with the whole Pada or quarter section. There is also Adhikarana-sangati which means the consistency of one Adhikarana or topic with another. Such Adhikarana-sangati is of six kinds, namely, (1) Akshepa-sangati or objection, (2) Drishtanta-sangati or illustration, (3) Pratidrishtanta sangati or counter-illustration, (4) Prasangasangati or incidental illustration, (5) Utpatti-sangati or introduction and (6) Apavada-sangati or exception.

It is a fact of great significance that every thinker tries to interpret the first word 'Atha' in the first Sutra according to his scheme of thought. The word merely means "Thereafter." The question naturally arises: "After what?" Baladeva says: "A person who has studied the Vedas and understood their meaning in a general way, who has been performing his Varnashrama-dharmas or duties according to the caste and station in life, who is truthful, whose mind has been purified and who has the good fortune to come into contact with a Knower of Truth, should take

to the study of the Vedanta Sutras He does not accept the view that a man must know the entire Karma kanda and Purva-mimamsa before studying the Sutras. Nor does he accept Sri Sankaracharya's view that Sadhana-chatushtaya is a necessary prerequisite, because such fourfold qualification, (Viveka, Vairagya, Shatsampatti, and Mumukshutva) cannot be got before associating with holy men and learning the truth from them. He does not attach any importance to the view that 'Atha' is an auspicious word and was used by Vyasa to ward off obstacles. He says that as Vyasa is an incarnation of God, his Sutras would not encounter any obstacles. Yet he does not wish to throw that meaning altogether overboard, and says that there is no harm if the word denotes auspiciousness, and that in that respect Vyasa followed the usage of others. It has always seemed to me that this is the most probable explanation. The word is used as the first word in all Sutras including the Nyaya, Vaisesika and Samkhya Darsanas which do not require any extraordinary moral and spiritual equipment before their study is begun

Baladeva follows Sri Chaitanya who himself followed Sri Madhva charya. In his Prameya Ratnavali he refers to nine doctrines: (1) God is the highest entity, (2) God is known through all the scriptures, (3) The world is real, (4) The differences are real, (5) The souls are real, (6) There are various grades of souls, (7) Liberation is by the attainment of God (8) The cause of liberation is the worship of God, (9) The sources of knowledge are three, viz., perception inference and scripture.

Baladeva divides the aspirants for salvation into three classes, viz., (1) Svanishtha or those devoted to the performance of acts with faith (2) Paranishtha or those who do all acts for the good of all and as an example to others, and (3) Nirapeksha or the sage immersed in meditation of God. He says that all of them attain God through Jnana.

The words Saguna and Nirguna are among the most puzzling terms in Hindu Philosophy. While Sri Ramanuja seems to love the word Saguna (possessed of auspicious attributes) and explains the word Nirguna in a laboured manner as "devoid of inauspicious attributes," Sri Baladeva seems to love the word Nirguna more than the word Saguna, because he takes Nirguna to mean "transcending the Gunas" and not "devoid of attributes," while he takes Saguna to mean "possessed of Gunas." He says that the Vedas describe only the Nirguna Brahman and not Saguna Brahman and that the Nirguna Brahman is the sole creator of the universe and that He alone can confer salvation. He makes this clear in his commentary on the Ikshati-adhikarana (II: 5 to 11). In his commentary on 1.1.7, he says that the Paramatma is Nirguna and that Moksha (salvation) is attained by the worship of Him alone. In his commentary on 1.1.10, he says that the distinction of Brahman as Saguna and Nirguna has no authority in the Vedas and that in the Gita Sri Krishna says that there is none higher than Himself (VII: 7). He refers to the Svetasvatara Upanishad I: 6.11 which says, "He is the witness, and He is the pure consciousness free from the three Gunas of Nature,"

and affirms that the creator of the universe is the Nirguna Brahman. In the Anandamaya-adhikarana (I.12 to 16) he says that the Anandamaya or "sheath of Bliss" is Nirguna Brahman and that the Annamaya, or "material sheath," etc. are referred to by way of the Arundhati Nyaya (the method of drawing attention to the unrecognisable through the easily recognisable) to make the concept of Brahman as Anandamaya cognisable by our limited minds.

I shall now analyse briefly the development of thought in Baladeva's Bhashya. The first quarter of the first chapter (Sainanvaya-adhyaya) explains as referring to Brahman the words like "Anandamaya," "Jyotis," "Prana," "Akasa," etc., which occur in a context clearly indicating a reference to Brahman. Quarters 2 and 3 explain as referring to Brahman words like "manomaya," "atta," etc., which occur in a context that does not clearly indicate reference to Brahman. The last quarter describes the Upanishadic texts which lend some countenance to the theory of Kapila that Pradhana or Primordial Matter and individual souls have independent existence. Baladeva accepts the view that Brahman is the material cause (Upadana-karana) as well as the efficient cause (Nimitta-karana) of the universe. Thus in the first chapter it is established that the Lord is the aim of the Vedantic teaching; that God is the material cause as well as the efficient cause of the universe; that He is different from everything; that He is the inner self of all; that He is free from all imperfections; and that He is infinite and possesses immeasurable auspicious qualities and powers. The first

chapter establishes these truths by the method of Samanvaya or method of harmonising divergent expressions, which is the true way of arriving at a correct interpretation of the Scriptural Texts.

In the second chapter (Avirodh-adhyaya) the aim of the Sutrakara is to disprove all the contrary views and to reconcile the apparent conflicts with the Smriti or traditional code. The first quarter of the second chapter is devoted to disprove the Sankhya view and to assert that the Vedic texts do not support that view. It attacks also such of the texts of the Yoga system as are opposed to the Vedanta: For example the doctrine that Pradhana is an independent cause of creation; that God is not the creator but only the Teacher of all and the ever-free Purusha; that liberation or Mukti means only cessation from pain etc. The second quarter refutes the Vaisesika system and the Buddhist doctrines. The third quarter proves that all the Tattvas originate from the Lord at the time of creation and merge into Him at the time of dissolution; that the souls (Jivas) are eternal and do not originate; that they are atomic and are all-pervading by the light of Jnana; that they are agents and modes of Brahman; that the Avatars of God are full manifestations of God; and that the diversities found among the Jivas are due to their Karmas. The last quarter of this chapter reconciles the conflict of the Scripture Texts regarding the Puranas.

The third chapter (Sadhana-adhyaya) refers to the Sadhanas or disciplines which lead to the attainment of Brahman. The principal Sadhanas are Vairagya or detachment and

Prema or love of God. The first quarter teaches about the imperfections of all worldly life, which alone engenders Vairagya. It affirms the doctrine of reincarnation with the object of making us turn away from Samsara. The second quarter describes the glorious attributes of God. It does so to kindle in us Prema or Bhakti for God. It describes the powers of God such as His being the creator of the dream world, His Avatars and their unity with Him, His essential form, His being separate from the worshipper, while being the worshipper's inmost self and His easy accessibility through Bhakti and Bhakti alone. The third treats of the methods of meditation on the various attributes of God. In God's being there exists many perfect forms just as there are many colours in gems. A man can select for meditation any one of such perfect forms, but should remember that the Lord is limited by such forms, while being fully manifest through it. He must meditate on the form chosen by him and should concentrate his mind on the attributes taught about that form in various Sakhas of the Vedas. He must not mix up incongruous things; that is, he must not meditate on the Matsyavatara as plying on the flute. The attributes to be meditated upon are of two sorts, *viz.*, the Gunas or attributes constituting the spiritual essence of the object of meditation, and the Gunas appertaining to the form of the object. The Gunas like omnipotence, omniscience, etc. belong to the first type; the Gunas like a smiling face etc. belong to the second type. The Gunas of the first type may be joined together collectively in a single meditation. Baladeva says

that the Svanishtha type of devotees (who are the cosmic divinities like Brahma and others) have equal love for all the forms of God, and meditate on all forms, and collate all the attributes of all the forms. It is also possible for them to do so in temporal succession, just as it is possible to see different prismatic hues at different times. He says further the Parinishtha and Nirapeksha types of devotees have Vishama-priti and not Sama-priti, and meditate only on those attributes which their particular form of God manifests and are blind to all other aspects of God. In the fourth quarter of the third chapter, the Sutrakara shows that Vidya (meditation and worship) is independent of Karma and is superior to it, and that devotees are of three types *viz.*, Svanishthas, Parainishthas and Nirapekshas.

The fourth chapter (Phala-adhyaya) discusses the fruits of Vidya or divine wisdom. God can and must be meditated upon as Atma and Isvara and Brahman. The first quarter teaches us to meditate in a sitting posture. He discusses Prarabdha, Sanchita and Agami Karmas. Sanchita and Agami Karmas are destroyed by knowledge and love of God, but the Prarabdha Karma continues in force. Baladeva shows that the Prarabdha Karma continues in force because God wishes such illumined sages and saints and seers to teach mankind. He says also that there is an exception to this rule in the case of the Nirapeksha devotees who, as soon as they perfect Vidya, attain liberation, because even their Prarabdha (both good and bad deeds) is immediately destroyed. In the second quarter, the author discusses

the mode of the soul's departure from the body at the time of death, in the case of a Jnani. The third quarter describes the Deva-yana or the Archi-radi-marga (the path which leads to Brahman). The fourth quarter describes the state of liberation by the attainment of Brahman.

In conclusion I may point out that Baladeva, like all Dvaitic and Visishtadvaitic commentators shows much bias against the Advaitic view and goes to the length of misrepresenting it. He denounces the hard-hearted Advaitins who think and say that God is mere Knowledge without bliss and other attributes, and who hold that joy is an attribute of matter and not of God. It is strange that this should be said of persons who say that God is Ananda. Baladeva thinks that Advaita says that the Gunas are merely superimposed (Adhyasta) on Brahman. The same Being is Absolute when viewed out of relation to the cosmos, which has no existence apart from Him, and is God when viewed in relation to the universe. He says that Nirguna means that Brahman has not got the Gunas of Prakriti (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), but has got transcendental or non-Prakritic Gunas. The Advaita says that the Lord is eternal and infinite Bliss, that the Gunas of God are only predication and affirmations about Brahman when he is viewed in relation to the Universe and are only prismatic refractions of His Bliss, and that they form the white light of Bliss when He is viewed in Himself and out of relation to the universe.

Another point on which there is war to the knife between him (as a

Dvaitin) and Advaita relates to the reality of the universe. He says that the world is real, and that it is called illusion or Asat only to create Vairagya in us. He says in his Prameya Ratnavali:

स्वशक्त्या सृष्टवान् विष्णुर्यथार्थं सर्वविजगत् ।  
इत्युक्ते: सत्यमेवैतत् वैराग्यार्थमसद्ब्रूचः ॥

The Advaita only declares that the world is Mithya, that it has a phenomenal or relative existence, and that when the absolute Jnana comes there is a stultification of the idea of manifoldness by the realisation of the infinite, eternal Blissful-Absolute.

Baladeva emphasises also the separateness of God and soul and universe, and combats the Advaita on this point also. Here again the Advaitic position is not properly understood or met. The Advaita postulates a relative plane on which the diversities exist, and affirms that the differentiations vanish in Jnana just as the refracted, lovely prismatic colours are nothing but the inclusive unitary white light.

Baladeva's Bhashya breathes a fervent spirit of piety and devotion and deserves careful study. The days of war among the sects of Hinduism are happily over and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has taught us how to regard the various paths as paths leading to the same goal. Baladeva's Bhashya belongs to the Vaishnavite cult. Among the Vaishnavas four schools are regarded as authoritative, though South India, ignoring the vast and wonderful Bhakti literature of North India, is vain enough to think much about the Ramanuja and Madhva schools alone.

A well-known verse says that Lakshmi inspired Sri Ramanuja-

charya, that Brahma inspired Sri Madhvacharya, that Rudra inspired Vishnusvami, and that the four Kumaras—Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata—inspired Nimbaraka:

रामानुजं श्रीः स्त्रीचक्रे मध्वाचार्ये चतुर्मुखः ।  
श्री विष्णुस्वामिन् रुद्रो निष्वादित्यं चतुः सनः ॥  
Baladeva has based his Bhashya on the Bhashyas of the above great Acharyas and has produced a work of rare and outstanding merit.

## CONDUCT OF A SPIRITUAL NOVICE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes on the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany, in December, 1938—The Editors.]

### I

TOO much of human feelings sometimes stand in the way of our spiritual progress. It is not a question of heartlessness, but a question of really purified feelings, of becoming 'pure in heart.'

*If you want to worship the Divine,  
first be Divine.*

In many cases it is good first to note down a definite set of ideas before we sit for meditation, otherwise the mind gets confused and everything becomes vague and hazy even when the beginning was good.

Spiritual life means developing a new sense of consciousness as distinct from the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body.

*May this physical body become pure, may my mind become pure, may my soul become pure. I am the Spirit free from all taints and impurities.*

The best way of attaining real purity is to think we are pure by nature, and never to think of sin, of impurity, of weakness, of imperfection. No. We are all perfect by nature, but we have forgotten our eternal perfection and thereby go on committing endless mistakes. But as soon as we regain the memory of our true essence, impurity, sin and imperfection are nothing more than so many dreams.

This purity wells up from within, because it is ours and has been ours from time immemorial. It never comes from outside. It is not super-added, nor to be newly created. Spiritual life means this growth from within, though really speaking it is not a growth, but only an uncovering; for unless perfection and purity were inside and belonged to our own essence, we could never become pure and perfect; we could never be saved.

Bring about a transformation within, then this transformation automatically finds expression in the outside world. Our entire nature must be purified. See that you do not only whitewash it, but that you lay the ground-colour on in the proper way. Have daily intense spiritual practice. That will help you to rise above your false, impure personality. Through your false, impure personality, your thoughts become impure and tainted; but if your real personality were impure, you could never be purified, and there could be no hope of salvation for any of you. Good thoughts, deeds and words are great aids; but they alone, without steady spiritual practice, are not enough, and they could never transform you into something which you are not.

## II

The Mantram is, as it were, the body of God, and it brings us nearer to the Divine. Shoot the arrow and see that the arrow reaches the right target and becomes fixed in it. With a calm, steady mind hit the target; and then, just like the arrow, be one with it. Ordinarily we have no target, and then everything just becomes aimless bombardment. Unless you have succeeded in hitting the target, you should never be satisfied.

Never tell anybody about your spiritual practices and your Mantram. Never disclose to anybody what you are told to do.

Too much softness, too much goodness, too much kindness, all these are very dangerous, especially if one wishes to lead a perfectly clean, sexless, celibate life. Fatiguing the body has its use, but it does not go to the root of the matter. It does not go to the root of sex. One has to take special care if one finds these thoughts troublesome. During such periods take a little less food. All such rules must be followed carefully. It is always better to be a little stiff on the surface, not to give expression to one's feelings, always to be reserved and dignified. Every aspirant must be reserved and dignified in his attitude towards the other sex. For then no person of the other sex will ever dare to show wrong feelings for him. The aspirant should be polite, but not chivalrous or romantic, but aloof and dignified. Every aspirant must be a gentleman or a gentlewoman; but there is no place for chivalry in the spiritual life, for chivalry, in most cases, has sex as its basis and is an expression of sex. In such cases it is far better to let the other sex say, "Ah, this fellow is afraid of us. He is rude. He has no heart for us." Never pay attention to anybody saying such things, but first you must redeem yourself from

sex, and then you can show others the way to do this and attain freedom. It is always better to salute the other sex at a safe distance, till a person has succeeded in redeeming himself from his sexual desires and impulses.

## III

Always keep your centre of consciousness; always watch the trend of your thoughts; always prevent impure thoughts from taking form, through concentration and extra meditation. This will greatly help you in giving them all the right direction. Always be careful in the choice of your food too.

In the case of a householder, if there are passions, the passions are satisfied; but in the case of the Brahmacharin the struggle becomes tremendous in some cases and at certain periods of his Sadhana, and then the danger is very great. First the Brahmacharin has to control the sexual passions and then he has to sublimate them. So the Brahmacharin and the earnest spiritual aspirant can never be careful enough. If we do not attain the ideal of perfect celibacy, which includes mental celibacy, not only physical celibacy, if we lower it the least bit, we are just nowhere as spiritual aspirants.

Plenty of hard exercise is very good. Torturing the body as the Christian mystics used to do, helps a little; for it, too, diverts the superfluous not yet transmuted energies and inhibits certain sexual centres; but all these do not strike at the root of the matter. Thus the problem just remains in abeyance and is never really solved.

Sex-consciousness is inseparable from body-consciousness, and to the extent we think we are not bodies and sexless, we attenuate the sex-instinct. Always shift the consciousness to the centre of your consciousness. See that you give the whole nervous current an upward direction.

## IV

Some people become very aggressive at the time of their Sadhana. The reason is this: We try to control the sex-thought, and some outside stimuli awaken it. So it finds its expression in aggressiveness. Be very careful about the company you allow yourself to be in. Avoid all people that are not leading a sexually pure and strictly moral life. All these people are extremely dangerous, if you really wish to struggle on.

Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed  
Of gain reside. No man who thinks  
of women  
As his wife can ever perfect be;  
Nor he who owns the least of things,  
nor he  
Whom anger chains, can ever pass  
thro' Maya's gates.  
So, give these up, Sannyasin bold!  
Say "Om Tat Sat, Om!"

*(Swami Vivekananda ! The Song of the Sannyasin)*

People who give free licence to their desires and passions in the name of freedom or fearlessness always come to grief. Once the Holy Mother remarked in connection with the fall of an advanced aspirant, "My child, one who at first accepts all objects of enjoyment except woman, cannot by any means resist woman for a long time. He cannot but succumb to this aspect of Maya."

## V

So long as Unity has not been fully realised in practical life, and one takes the relative plane to be intensely real, one should not fail to mark the differences in the manifestations and act wisely. In the One there is no difference, but in the phenomenal world there is always a difference between a fool and an intelligent person, between an unreflective and a reflec-

tive one, between a spiritual person and a worldling.

As Swamiji very nicely puts it, though both are made of the same substance, the clay-elephant is not the same as the clay-mouse. There is no question of equality on the phenomenal plane. So Sri Ramakrishna always used to say, "Give honour where honour is due." Those who lose all sense of proportion in the phenomenal can never attain to the Absolute plane. One who is established in Unity is alone fearless. All others are cowards who try to hide their inner weakness with a show of strength and independence. It is all self-deception.

In the West, all these sexually aggressive people one meets make it terribly difficult for you and intensify your struggle. Avoid all such danger-zones and all such free people who are proud of their so-called freedom which is nothing but abject slavery. If you cannot find clean people of your own sex, avoid all company and stay alone in the company of the Lord. This is the only way to salvation for the beginner. Avoid all talks about the other sex or sex-topics. Avoid seeing any sexually attractive picture. Do not read any novels or any other book on such topics. Do not see any plays that have to do with sex. Avoid the outward sex-stimulus so long as the tug-of-war is going on inside you. All reading and any occupation that brings us in touch with any form of sex-stimulus must be carefully avoided during the period of our Sadhana. If we do not do this, we shall never attain the necessary purification for the higher forms of practices and we are bound to come to grief, sooner or later. Then there is no freedom and no fearlessness for us. Then we shall never rise to the full stature of a human being, but always remain animals with more or less developed minds.

## THE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES BEHIND HINDU POLITICAL THEORY.

BY M. RAMAKRISHNAIYYA

[The title discloses the contents of this article. The writer acknowledges his indebtedness to Sir Radhakrishnan's *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* for some of the ideas developed here.—The Editors.]

The purpose of this article is to sketch those political theories which are derived from, or based on, the religious principles of Hinduism, and not to summarise all the theories contained in the writings of Hindu political thinkers.

The Hindu conception of cosmogony postulates a Creator and created beings. The creatures have been created by the Creator out of Himself. The universe with its diverse contents is, therefore, a material manifestation of the Divinity. In and behind each particle of the creation, there exists the spirit of the Creator, His divinity. On this basis Hinduism develops a significant thought: each individual unit of creation, embodying within itself a spark of the divine, has the potentiality of attaining or becoming the Divine itself, having shed all its material fetters. This fruitful hope of reaching the ultimate is at the very base of the theory of Karma and the conception of 'Maya'. The theory of Karma pictures a long and patient evolution through which the smallest makes its way up to the Divine. During the process, mistakes may be committed and they have to be accounted for. The dominating idea is always progress, in spite of occasional regressions. All creatures are subject to this process without any exception. The universality of its scope tends to affirm the spiritual equality of each individual involved in it. The attainment of the

Divine, which is the ultimate goal of the individuals, logically results in the transience of a particular stage, its 'Maya'. Life at a particular point of time ceases to be real. It is 'Mithya'.

This position of the Hindu is often cited as an explanation for the political failures of the Hindu nation. It is said that Hinduism encourages men to treat the world with contempt and to work without, against, and inspite of, the world with eyes fixed on the ultimate goal. This criticism misses a salient point in the Hindu religion, which holds that the world as a *reality* is not real but as a form or a manifestation of the *reality* is real and has to be treated as such. To attain the *reality* is no doubt the lofty aim; but to attain it the world which is the means undoubtedly deserves attention. Precisely for this reason, Hinduism has formulated the four ends of life, the four classes of society, the four stages of growth and the State itself.

Thus the State, from the point of view of Hinduism, exists to help the individual to know his inner self and to identify himself with it in the Ultimate. Its *raison d'être* is, in short, the perfection of the individual. To create and maintain favourable conditions for such perfection, to enable each individual to live the 'good life' by realising his 'Dharma'—these are the functions of the Hindu State. The forms of government quite naturally are but secondary in Hindu political

thought. They are all tested from this supreme standard, whether it be the rule of the one, of the few, or of the many, it does not matter. The question is whether the government does its duty well, i. e., whether it asserts the spiritual equality of the individuals and provides them opportunities to march up the ladder of Karma.

The king, therefore, is not absolute. He is always subject to the requirements of the members of the State. Moreover, himself being an individual with potentiality for perfection, he has to perform his 'Dharma' and thus make his future birth still better and nearer to the ideal, according to the ruthless operation of the law of Karma. The fear of degradation in the birth always haunts him and goads him to righteous actions. This is not merely a theoretical, exposition of Hindu religion. The history of Hindu kings bears ample testimony to this fact.

It is sometimes argued that Hindu Kingship is based on the 'divine right' just as the kingship in medieval Europe. This is not quite true. Hindu Sastras never preached that the King or even any "high priest" is God's viceroy on earth, in the full European sense. The king no doubt, is the great divinity manifest in the shape of a man (Manu). "He is *created*", as Manu says, "out of the eternal essence of the deities, Iudra, wind-god, Yama (Death), Sun, Fire, Varuna (Water-god), Moon, and Vittesa (the lord of riches)." The important point of Manu's saying is that the king is also a creature like every other man. The speciality about him is that he was created out of the essence of certain gods, thereby symbolically defining the functions and the powers of the king. For that reason, then, "his energy overwhelms all creatures in the world." An important

distinction is made between a king who is "a part of the gods" and another who is "a part of the demons" Manu-Samhita (from which the above passage has been taken), Kamandaka-Nitisara and Sukra Niti, besides many others insist that it is not all kings who are in essence fragments of the gods. Only those who keep the 'Dharma' (the Platonic virtue) are godly, 'part of the gods.' Otherwise, a king becomes a 'part of the demons' and the "Parkriti" or people are entitled to resist and kill such a king.

The Hindu Kingship is a public office. None of the Hindu kings, except the most despotic could claim power in their own person. The power of the king, in Hindu political theory, is not a personal equation ; it is the attribute of his office, So, Manu Samhita says : "the king, if he be an infant, must not be belittled in the knowledge of his human birth."

Something may be here said on the Hindu theory of the origin of the State. It seems to be common to all religions to think of society arising out of chaos or 'Pralaya.' This conception of the state of chaos was later passed on to political theory and we see in Hobbes a typical description of it. The politics of Hinduism, likewise, follows the method of dichotomy, and divides time into two epoches one in which the State exists and the other in which it did not. According to the doctrine of 'Matsya-nyaya' or the logic of Fish, the Hindu political thinkers described 'the state of nature' in which men behaved towards each other like fishes, the stronger ones devouring the weaker. The State is organised as an escape from this miserable condition ; "Out of terror all creatures run about when the world suffers anarchy ; hence, the Lord created the king for the protection of all" (Manu). The State has thus been created for a definite purpose to achieve

which the king was made. But the king was made for the protection of all. His power from the outset is conditional. Another point of importance is that the protection is for all, strong and weak alike; thus the equality of rights of all persons is guaranteed.

It has been made clear that the State exists for the sake of the individual and, the king rules for making the 'good life' possible. The individual is clearly the end and the society is only a means. The relations between the two can best be brought about by a reference to the synthesis and graduation of (i) the four-fold object of life (Purushartha) desire and enjoyment (Kama), interest (Artha), ethical living (Dharma) and spiritual freedom (Moksha); (ii) the fourfold Order of Society (Varna), the man of learning (Brahmin), of power (Kshatriya), of skilled productivity (Vaisya), and of service (Sudra); and (iii) the fourfold succession of the stages of life (Asrama), student (Brahmachari), householder (Grihasta), forest recluse (Vanaprastha) and the free super-social man (Sannyasin).

The four ends of life points to the different sides of human nature, the instinctive and the emotional, the economic, the intellectual and the ethical, and the spiritual. Hinduism puts a high premium on the last and makes the rest means to its achievement. Society, therefore, exists for the Hindu in so far as it aids him to reach 'Moksha.' The necessity of such a high ideal in practical life will be evident to us if only we turn to the damages caused to the spirit of man and his civilisation by an excessive attention to mundane and material things.

The four classes of Hinduism remind one of the Platonic classification of society. Their importance and usefulness are evident as a far-reaching division of labour. Each man has a station in life which is decided by his faculties to

serve the society. Society, then, is a number of groups inter-dependent in view of their respective functions. The fourfold classification, moreover, is conceived in the interests of world progress (लाकाना तु विश्वार्थम्). It was in pursuance of such a view that Hindu leaders accepted primitive societies and foreign settlers such as the Greeks and Scythians into the Hindu fold and recognised their priestly families as Brahmins and their fighting men as Kshatriyas.

In a real sense, the fourfold scheme is democratic. Firstly, it insists on the spiritual equality of all men. It assumes that within every human creature there is a self which has the right to grow in its own way. Secondly it makes for individuality in the positive sense. Individuality is attained not through an escape from limitations but through the willing acceptance of obligations; and it is wrong to assume that true individuality consists in doing as one pleases. Thirdly, it points out that all work is useful and from the social standpoint equally important. Fourthly, social justice or equality is not a scheme of rights but of opportunities. Fifthly, the essence of democracy is generous consideration for others. No one class in the Hindu system can make unlimited claims. Each class contributing its share towards social welfare and receiving the due necessities. The class system reminds us of the socialist dogma "From every man according to his capacities, to every man according to his needs." However idealised this may be, it yet contains an element of truth. Early Hindu society, especially in villages, used to take special care to provide the villagers with their requirements. This was generally managed by the Panchayat, the elected five of the village. There are many instances in the extant records of the Pallavas, for example,

illustrating the democratic procedure of voting by ballot and also the modern committee system.

The significance of all these schemes lies in the fact that they have for their aim the development of the individual. They are helpful and not indispensable.

Sankara tell us that they are like a saddle horse which helps a man to reach his goal easily and quickly, but even without it man, can arrive there. The motto of the political theory of Hinduism seems to be;

"The State for the man".

## FRONTISPICE TO THE GITA: WHAT IT SIGNIFIES

BY SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

[The dramatic opening of the Bhagavad Gita can very well be a vital theme for artistic representation. Most of the editions of the Gita one may open give a picture portraying the scene. It is a pity that no master painter has a perfect picture drawn on this theme. But the figure vividly presents itself before the mind of anyone who reads Vyasa's lively description carefully. And it never fades. In the following paragraphs an able attempt is made to unravel the profound meaning of this great piece of art.—The Editors.]

MANY were the chariots that drew to the battlefield of Kurukshetra where the fate of the rulers of earth was to be decided. Among those royal cars the most conspicuous one was that in which Arjuna drove. Its prominence was not so much due to its brilliance in structure as to the person who acted as the charioteer. It was none other than the Lord of Yoga, the Eternal Presence in the hearts of all—embodied as Sri Krishna. Through His act He graced not only Partha, the foremost among warriors, but also the occasion on which the virtuous were to wage a sanguine war against the vicious. Sri Krishna had given promise not to wield weapon in that great war; but neither commitment nor etiquette of warfare stood in the way of His officiating as a charioteer. The thoughtless belittled that function. But it was only given to a knowing few to understand what that apparently insignificant service meant. It is the guide in life that decides the career. The Divine Charioteer's function is not merely to provide for the mundane life but for life eternal pre-eminently. And Sri Krishna's position was to fulfil that high office.

Arjuna was in the beginning hardly conscious of all the implications of the pending war. Neither did he care to pay heed to the significance of Divinity on earth acting as his driver. With the wonted light-heartedness of an ever victorious warrior he arrived on the arena. He was inquisitive to know them that dared oppose him and his righteous cause. The words that he addressed to his Divine Charioteer betrayed haste and impulsiveness. He seemed to lack in foresight and cool judgment. "O Achyuta—the unfloundering—place my car between the two armies so that I may see them, who stand here prepared for war. I should like to know who they are; whom I have to encounter in the pending war." This light remark was characteristic of Arjuna, the normal man under the normal circumstances.

Man is great or small according to the mind he is endowed with. The way in which mind reacts to varying conditions in life is the one infallible evidence by which its worth can be ascertained. Arjuna had been till now acquitting himself as the best among heroes. He had not known what defeat was. Virtue and valour marked

him for their own. All the possible human excellances have been already attained by him. That he had lost his kingdom was a mere accident which was to be rectified soon. To have been worthy of a high position in life was more important than the actual enjoyment of that position. With or without an empire he was a monarch among men. Besides reclaiming his empire on earth, had he nothing else to acquire ? There arose a critical situation which alone could give a satisfactory answer to this question. None excels the Yogesvara in availing such opportunities and psychological moments to teach man supreme lessons in life. Man is nothing more than an intellectual or moral animal if he has every other equipment but the spiritual enlightenment. Kingdom on earth counts for nothing compared with the kingdom of the soul. Monarchs who struggle for mere earthly possessions are no better than children who quarrel among themselves for toys. How far had Arjuna known the philosophy of life ? To expose the naked truth with regard to this vital question Sri Krishna had driven the chariot not anywhere between the two rival armies, but directly in front of Bhishma and Drona whom Arjuna had been always holding in high esteem.

Beholding them among the enemies, Partha's martial spirit received a rude shock. The soft corner of his heart was touched. How was he to change the reverential attitude which he had in respect of his grand sire and Guru and that of rivalry at a moments notice? The dark side of life presents its picture before him. He is completely unnerved. Mind gets clouded. The meaning and purpose of life become vague to him. Retreat into penury rather than taking up arms against the revered elders, seems to have become his motto all on a sudden. He resorts to a negative attitude towards life. With dejection he lays down

arms. This was the situation under which the Bhagavad Gita came into existence. This scene is rightly portrayed as the frontispiece to this famous dialogue between the human and the Divine.

To convey to the reader the purport of the frontispiece, it is customary to cull out and affix to it the most appropriate passage from the body of the book. Which among the seven hundred verses in the Gita is to have that rare privilege? There are about a dozen verses which can legitimately compete for this supreme distinction. And strangely enough, these very rival verses are rich with meaning. As nature allows herself to be read and interpreted variously by various branches of knowledge, even so these verses are eternal sources of inspiration for several systems of thought, all of which claim support for their existence from the self-same verses in the Gita. Perhaps it is the nature of Truth to allow Itself to be interpreted in innumerable ways. Also all types of men who wend their way Godward draw life and strength in apparently diverse ways from the same source. He really sees who sees harmony and fulfilment behind these seemingly contrary readings of the Reality.

It may be maintained that the eighteenth verse of the fourth chapter is the most appropriate one that can be suffixed to the scene that Partha and his Divine Sarathy present prior to the shower of the immortal Song Celestial.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येद् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः  
स बुद्धिमान्मुच्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत्

"He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is intelligent among men, he is a Yogi and a doer of all action."—This may be said to be the theme of the Gita. The entire message is condensed into this stanza. It will not be out of place if, before

attempting to establish relationship between this verse and the frontispiece, a brief account is given of a few pertinent commentaries on it.

One commentator defines Akarma as the activity of the Lord, since 'a', the first alphabet in Sanskrit, is also the name of Vishnu, the all pervading Entity. He paraphrases the first line of the stanza thus: All actions which beings believe are theirs, belong in fact to the Supreme Controller of the universe. But for Him, naught moves. Sound sleep and dream do not contribute towards carving out the career of a Jiva or individual soul. They are not counted upon as the Karma of beings. But even such actions emanate from Iswara. Thus what are discredited as inaction from human point of view are also actions from the point of view of the Propeller of the Universe. His will alone is to be recognised in and through all actions.

Another commentator defines Akarma as knowledge. सर्वं कर्मस्त्विलं पर्यज्ञाने परिसमाप्ते—“All action in its entirety, O Partha, attains its consummation in knowledge.” With this end in view the same line is paraphrased thus: No conscious action goes to waste. It contributes towards experience. In its turn experience makes action more efficient. Thus work and knowledge aid each other in the path to perfection. To serve God and to know God become finally identical.

A third commentator views man as constituted of Purusha and Prakriti—Awareness and Nature. Akarma or actionlessness is characteristic of the former and Karma or action of the latter. Of the self luminous, actionless consciousness and the unconscious ever active matter, confusing one for the other, is born of ignorance. Egoism is born of identifying one with the other. The goal is to rid oneself of this superimposition. With that the

purpose in life is achieved. Such an enlightened Purusha, being established in steady wisdom, may incessantly engage himself in all the activities that present themselves before him. Still he is not tainted by action. On the other hand, in his quest after quietism, when an unenlightened soul makes a formal renunciation of Karma, he only goes into greater darkness. Spiritual illumination is the only means to shake off the shackles of Karma.

These interpretations are not mere academic discussions. They have their bearings on the life of an aspirant. But the greatest and the best commentary that can be ever had on the Gita is the life of Sri Krishna. He had not taught anything that he did not embody in His life. The Yogesvara only preached those principles of which He was a living personification. This is the one special trait of the saviours of mankind. The life they live is an eternal sermon. Their words are all powerful because of their Divine Life. The principles embodied in the Gita and the personality of Sri Krishna who gave utterance to them are inseparable. To understand what Divine Life is, the Gita and the life of the Teacher of the Gita have to be known together.

Towards the close of the first chapter in the Gita, Arjuna was an embodiment of action in inaction (अकर्मणि च कर्म). He had seemingly given up Karmas. The celebrated Bow, Gandiva is laid aside. The shafts go to sleep in the sheath. The hands make gestures that there is no use in taking part in this terrible engagement. Behind this show of abandonment of work his face is the index to the mind within him. Great cogitation goes on within. Conflicting ideas and feelings overwhelm him. Arjuna succumbs to the unbalanced state of mind. While body poses quietude, mind is in convulsions. This unbecomes a Yogi—a perfect man.

In contrast with this, Krishna personifies inaction in action (कर्मयकर्म). His body is intensely engaged in work. Every muscle has to be strained in directing the chariot to vulnerable points in warfare. His one hand tightly holds the reins lest the spirited snow-white steeds, four in number, should dash ahead. The other hand is both to manipulate the whip on the horses and to hold Gnana-mudra when He discourses with Arjuna on the philosophy of action. While the body is thus steadily acting, the real personality of Sri Krishna is unruffled. Because of the mind being completely under control, the Yugesvara's face is calm and smilingly serene. Ceaseless activity and eternal equilibrium are well combined in his whole demeanour.

The contrast between man as he is and man as he ought to be, is lucidly brought out in this scene which Arjuna and Achyuta present to us. This may also be said to be the gist of the teaching of the Gita. That man alone is intelligent who understands the difference between inaction in action, and action in inaction. To the extent one understands the principles governing life, transformation in life takes place. And so he is called a Yogi. The knower of action and inaction achieves everything pertaining to life here and hereafter. As such he is called कृत्स्न कर्म कृत्— the doer of all action. That man should outgrow the position of Arjuna of the first chapter in the Gita, and rise to the level of Sri Krishna, the Constant under all circumstances, is the supreme lesson that we learn from the frontispiece.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Three Famous Mystics : Saint-Martin, Jacob Boehme and Swedenborg.** By A. E. Waite, D. Litt. and W. P. Swainson. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London. E. C. 4, Price 5 sh. net. Pp. 192.

The age of the Revolution in France was not without occult activities and interests. The Emblematical Institution of Freemasonry was widespread in France, and the mystic Saint-Martin was connected with two of its Rites. Louis Claude De Saint-Martin belonged to the French nobility, and though frail physically, he was characterised by great mental activity. From youth he was disposed towards the life of contemplation and the path of mysticism, with a strong love for reason and justice. At eighteen he had attained certainty as to God and his own soul and established the conviction that truth alone is to be loved and pursued above all other concerns of life. He was intimately connected with magical rites of masonic grades; he left it early even though he had attained the highest grade—that of Rose Croix. His search after truth took a different turn, the details of which are available in his literary works; the first

among them he wrote in a cryptic manner. His allegiance to Christ is however quite evident. According to Saint-Martin's theory, good and evil are based on the doctrine of two unequal principles; and man came from the Divine goodness. Though fallen from the high state, according to him, in respect of potencies, all are Christs. In one of his important works he develops the Doctrine of Correspondences. The universe is compared to a temple, "the stars are its lights, the earth is its altar all corporeal beings are its holocausts, and man, who is priest of the Eternal, offers the sacrifice." Similar ideas one comes across in Vedic liturgy. The external world is illusory and God is the meaning of it. According to his teachings the evil in man originated with his will. The most inspired writing of Saint-Martin is "The Man of Desire" on every page of which one may detect his hunger and thirst after God. Towards the close of his life he came into contact with the writings of Jacob Boehme. His last original work the *Ministry* is an "intimations of immortality." It is his swan song—his last contemplation. Saint-Martin passed painlessly away in a final act of contemplation. Dr. Waite's monograph is well documented and instructive.

Mr. Swainson's study of Jacob Boehme, the illiterate shoemaker mystic, and Swedenborg the highly educated theological mystic, are written very attractively. Born of simple but respectable peasants at Saxony, in rural surroundings, Jacob became meditative and wistful in early life and got illumination lasting for seven days as a hansel of his widened spiritual consciousness. Again at the age of 25 while walking in a field he got a second illumination which enabled him to see into the inmost principles and deepest foundations of things—the mystery of creation was disclosed to him. He saw and know the Being of all beings, the Byss and Abyss. In a third illumination his scattered intuitions were co-ordinated. He noted down his experiences for his own use in the book called the *Aurora*. He fell foul with the heresy-hunting priests and councils, but saved himself by voluntary exile. Boehme possessed the qualities of a true religious man—modesty, patience, gentleness and unassuming behaviour. He possessed also the Divine consciousness. He never took credit for his spiritual knowledge. He said, "I am the Lord's twig or branch, and am a very mean and little spark of His; He may set me where He pleaseth." Boehme, the first great Protestant mystic, had wonderful power to read the past and future of men; the outer form of men and things always suggested to him the inner reality. To him the universe was the outcome and development of One Grand Thought. As many other mystics his religious thoughts and philosophic concepts are couched in allegories and symbolic expressions. The substratum of all things is the Abyss, which exactly corresponds to the Brahman of Hindu philosophy, wherefrom everything manifest by virtue of a Byss or uncreated will potentially one with it. Duality is only in the stage of manifestation. God is in Himself the Abyss without any will at all, but He makes himself a Byss or Ground. There is a good deal of resemblance between this conception and the Siva-Sakti view of India or the Kshetra-Kshetrajna concept of the Gita. The Supreme is a principle of Fire and Light, Law and Love. "Heaven," according to Boehme, "is not a distinct locality, but a spheres existing side by side with and interpenetrating the physical universe, though veiled from normal sight." A more historical faith will never save a man. "Wrapping ourselves round externally with the robe of Christ's righteousness is worse than useless, if inwardly we remain wild beasts." To understand Divine wisdom, he insisted, one should im-

merse oneself unconditionally in the will of God, giving up all self-will. To enter heaven, be a child, he said, and not a superman. Though he was a firm believer in the historic Christ, the true mystic he was, he held that even those who have never heard of Christ are saved if they stand in the Light Principle. To him God was both immanent and transcendent; in a passage which is an unerring echo of the Upanishadic passage (Ch. III, 14, 2) he says: "He is an allmighty, all-wise, all-knowing, all-seeing, all-hearing, all-smelling, all-tasting God, who in Himself is meek, friendly, gracious, merciful and full of joy; Yea, joy itself." Though this uneducated mystic struggled to find suitable words to express his experiences, still we have in his writings practically inexhaustible hidden riches. This enlightened shoemaker was the very emblem of humility. "We speak of loving all, but unless our love is firmly rooted in humanity it will be dissipated by the first spasm of self-will."

The Swedish seer on the other hand was a highly intellectual scholar and mystic, a widely travelled genius full of scientific and other knowledge. His first discovery was that "true philosophy and contempt of God are two opposites." He had several open visions and claimed to have seen the Last Judgment and talked with angels and devils and to have visited the Lunarian dwarfs and intellectual Mercurians in his astral body. However he was a man of solid common sense; industrious, abstemious, cheerful, agreeable, and methodical. He almost abandoned animal food in the last fifteen years of his life. He wrote: "...eating the flesh of animals is somewhat profane...in process of time, when men became as cruel as wild beasts, yea, much more cruel, they began to slay animals and eat their flesh; and in consideration of this nature in man, the killing and eating of animals was permitted, and continues to be so." He was conscious that he was only an instrument of the Lord. He wrote innumerable books, his only recreation being walking and giving sweets to children when he met them on the road.

One of the outstanding features of his teachings is the doctrine of correspondences by which he sought to explain everything by a spiritual counterpart. The seven days of creation symbolised the seven states or stages in the regeneration of man, the seventh day typifying the attainment of perfection. Sun represented Divine Love and wisdom; and the

Bible was thus interpreted right through in a symbolic manner. Even the literally true statements in the Bible, he held, contained the spiritual meaning as a moist sponge holds water. He has a very elaborate theory about the Last Judgment. However he was not neglectful in laying proper emphasis on spiritual virtues such as charity, faith and the like—a fact which one hardly perceives through his concrete, colourful and vivid writings on heaven, hell and all such imponderables. "This spiritual columbus," as our author puts it, "discovered, revealed, and demonstrated to a world lost in materialism the existence of a spirit world beyond." And that, apart from all that a mystic does and thinks, is the most important value. The book is really an asset to all who are interested in christian mysticism in as much as it presents a beautifully lucid study of three important mystics of christendom.

**Elements of Hindu Culture and Sanskrit Civilization.** By *Prasanna Kumar Acharya, I. E. S., M. A., (Calcutta), Ph. D. (Leiden), D. Litt. (London). Professor and Head of the Sanskrit Department, Allahabad University. Published by Mehar Chand Lachman Das, Proprietor, The Sanskrit Book Depot, Jain Street, Said Mitha Bazaar, 1939, Price Re. 1-8 Foreign 2s. 6d. Pp. 184. Paper cover.*

"In this little book," explains the author in the Preface, "mere elements of Hindu Culture and Sanskrit civilization have been briefly dealt with in consideration of the present need. This does not aim at an elaborate discussion. It has grown out of lecture notes delivered at B. A., and M. A., classes in ancient history sections of our History and Sanskrit Departments. For detailed treatment of the subjects standard works will have to be consulted." The general outline of this book includes brief expositions of 'Family Life,' 'Social Life,' 'Political Life,' and 'Moral and Spiritual Life' in ancient India. Under each of these headings a detailed outline is given accompanied by short descriptions. One gets from it a lightning glimpse of the entire range of ancient Indian life and thought, art and crafts. On the whole the book deals with the ideal of family life, marriage, sacraments, four stations and castes, food, clothes, ornaments, houses, furniture, means of livelihood, property (common and public) agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, coinage, writing, literature, State and its sources of power and income, forms of government, its working, bases of Law, the six systems of philosophy, forms

of religions, cults and beliefs, and the bare features of Buddhism and Jainism. The author states that he has not seen the book through the press; and this must account for the drawbacks one may find in it. References are missing in the case of some of the citations, the presence of which would have been very valuable for further study. Being class-notes the book is in the form of a mere skeleton, which the student has to fill up with further study. But it will be helpful for "modern students, competitors in Service examinations, legislators, debators, and executives, all of whom have but limited time and patience, and *no inclination for an extensive study and a scholarly investigation*," (italic ours) as the author himself puts in the preface. No attempt is made to evaluate the facts adduced or study them critically and comparatively, which would be beyond the scope of such a small book. The outlook regarding some important points is the same as that of many a western writer; for instance on p. 49 he says that the Aryans conquered the aborigines of India and treated them as the Native Christians are treated by European Christians. How far the western parallels are applicable to ancient Indian conditions cannot be conclusively ascertained from the absolutely insufficient data available at present. What is forbidden in the *Sastras* is failure to do one's duty and not "excessive religious zeal" p. 29. *Sreyasi kena tripyate.* Religion is *Dharma-nishtha*, zeal for which can never surfeit. Sanskrit civilization spreads over 3,000 years and therefore a chronological account is necessary; here the Vedic and Buddhistic periods have only been freely drawn upon. We wish a good circulation of the book, especially among those who rest in the belief that the past of India is all a blank and she has to learn everything from the West.

**Sikhism : Its Ideals and Institutions :** By *Tej Singh, M. A., Published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., Pp. 146, Price Rs. 2.*

The annals of the Sikhs and their religion afford an interesting chapter in the history of religions. Started as a sympathetic reaction against the exotic influences in Mediaeval India, by the great Guru Nanak, the Sikh religion gradually developed into a strong military movement, out of sheer struggle for existence, under the guidance of the great Govind Singh, the last Guru. And even now the Sikhs constitute one of the finest military races in the world. So a study of the history of the Sikhs will prove helpful to those who

want to bring about a military outlook among the mild Hindus, in view of the uncertain world conditions. The book under review is a comprehensive document of Sikhism, dealing with the dual aspects of creed and organisation. It gives a compendious survey of the nature of God, man, Guru, forms and symbols, organisation, sect, and rites and ceremonies under the system. It does not appear to have left out anything worth knowing about the Sikh faith from the average reader's point of view. The readers of the book cannot afford to forget the fact that Sikhism bears very close relationship with Hinduism, however much it may be claimed to be distinct from it in its social organisation. It is also necessary to emphasise that in order to bring about a unity in national life all the sects that have their origin in India must rally round the banner of the Mother of Religions and put a stop to the disruptive tendencies that have been eating into the vitals of the country for more than a millennium. We recommend this book to the public as a handy and dependable guide to Sikhism. The book is nicely printed and got up and contains a valuable index.

**Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture :**  
By Paul Brunton. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster House, London, E. C. Pages 92, Price 3 sh. 6 d.

In this small book Dr. Paul Brunton tries to show the resemblances between the conclusions arrived at by ancient Indian thought and modern thought of the west, especially as it has developed of late under the influence of 20th century science. It is in the monastic and idealistic tendencies of both that Dr. Brunton stresses. He supports his ideas on the subject by a large number of appropriate quotations from original sources of Indian and Western philosophies. Besides the intrinsic value and interest of these quotations, they will help one to form an idea of how "the human mind has explored the same paths in both Orient and Occident, amid the shadows of antiquity and under the bright glare of modernity." The book unlike most of the other writings of Dr. Brunton is written more from the point of view of a scholar than of a Journalist. The general reader of both the East and the West will find it useful for mutual understanding and as an introduction to higher studies in spiritual philosophy.

**Problems of the Bhagavadgita.** By Dewan Bahadur K. S. RamaSwami Sastri. Price 8

as. Copies can be had of the author at 47, Lloyds Road, Royapettah, Madras.

This is a welcome analysis of the thoughts of the Bhagavadgita in lucid language closely following the text in its development. The author's devout outlook and penetrating insight into the inner content of the great scripture is in evidence throughout the work. Hardly any new matter is thrown into the stream of the Gita thought and no quaint theory or preconceived doctrine is sought to be authorised by the Gita; nor is this hoary text deemed here a convenient peg to hang all that the author has thought about religion and philosophy. Its brevity and directness is invitingly refreshing. This brochure will surely be a help, we believe, to all who have read the Gita carefully a few times and familiarised themselves with its thoughts and are looking up for some guidance to coordinate the different and various strands of thought they have got themselves acquainted with. It is just at that stage such a masterly topical outline becomes serviceable.

The book discusses some of the problems of the Gita, namely, those of Scholarship, of life, of method or Yoga and of Truth or Sankhya in four Books, and the fifth Book is put up as a conclusion summarising the whole in a pithy manner. Each of these Books are further sub-divided into chapters with appropriate headings. A very healthy synthetic outlook prevents the author from being enticed by the grandeur of any particular school of interpretation, even though he recognises respectfully the contributions of the great Acharyas. The text is always in the focus, and the Teacher of the Gita never forgotton in busying with the teaching or philosophy of the Gita. This divorce of the Teacher's life from the philosophy has been the cause of compartmentalising Jnana and Bhakti, Karma and art of concentration. Scholars who ignore the author of the Gita, however they may anatomise the text and use all historical scholarship in their armoury, will never understand the meaning of the Gita which is a perfect whole, as shown in this book. "I have tried," says the writer, "in this work only to interpret the Gita in its own divine light accepting aid from all quarters and praying to the Lord Krishna for guidance and illumination. . . . I have spoken not as one clothed with authority . . . only as one who has for years read and meditated on the Gita". This alone can be the right equipment to understand and interpret this august scripture; and so we get the beautiful synthesis of Saguna and

*Nirguna, Jnana and Bhakti* and various other themes of spiritual search. We heartily recommend the book to our readers.

**Maharshi's Gospel:** Being answers of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharishi to questions Put to Him by Several Devotees. Published by Sri Niranjanananda Swami: Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. Price 5 As.

The Maharshi, as is well known, is purely a product of traditional Indian spirituality untouched by world influences. If there is any distinction about his teachings it is that he limits himself to a single theme which he has repeated and emphasised whenever occasion has demanded—that is Self-realisation. The quintessence of his teaching may be noted in the following words of his own culled from the book: "The Self is the one reality." page 52. "The Self is absolute consciousness and therefore self-contained". P. 13. "The Self is God." p. 53. "To see God is to be God." p. 86. "Whether you make *dhyana* on God or on the Self, it is immaterial for the Goal is the same." p. 35. "There is no difference between God, the Guru and the Self." p. 55. "He is both internal and external." p. 54. "There is only one Master, and that is the Self." p. 55. "The Master is within; meditation is meant to remove the ignorant idea that He is outside." p. 55. "The Self shines forth when the mind vanishes." p. 25. "The one obstacle is the mind." p. 8. "The Self alone exists; for mind, body and world are not separate from Self." p. 25. "The realised man does not see the world as different from Himself." p. 52. "The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the mind." p. 8. "The Jnani crushes the ego at the Source". p. 48. "By constantly keeping one's attention on the Source the ego is dissolved in the Source like a salt doll in the sea." p. 14. "The ego submits only when it recognises the Higher power." p. 38. "Samadhi alone can reveal the truth." p. 48. Stillness or peace is realisation". p. 46. "The inner silence is self-surrender, and that is living without the sense of ego." p. 21.

Regarding the discipline required to attain the goal the Maharshi expresses himself in these phrases: "Japa means clinging to the one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts. It leads to *Dhyana* which ends in Self-realisation or *Jnana*. One should not use the Name of God artificially and superficially without feeling, *Bhava*. To use the name of God one must call upon Him and

unreservedly surrender to Him ... There is no difference between *Jnana* and absolute surrender to the Lord, that is, in thought, word and deed. To be complete, surrender must be unquestioning; the devotee cannot bargain with the Lord or demand favours at his hands. Such entire surrender comprises all: it is *Jnana* and *Vairagya*, Devotion and Love". p. 38. "Keepidg God in your mind becomes *Dhyana* and *Dhyana* is the stage before Realisation." p. 35. "God or the Guru never forsakes the devotee who has surrendered himself." p. 60. "Places as such have nothing to do with the activities of the mind. ... You should rise above them and not get yourself entangled in them". p. 31. According to the Maharshi, "renunciation is the non-identification of the Self with the not-Self". p. 34. He insists that "Self-surrender is the same as Self-knowledge and either of them implies Self-Control." p. 33.

The Maharshi did not choose to express himself on other human problems however much the world may think of their importance. His answer to exotic question is probably silence if he could not give an answer that falls within the orbit of his one theme. But his general attitude is clear from this sentence: "If God created the world, it is His business to look after it, not yours." p. 52. But he adds: "Atmajnani alone can be a good *Karmayogi*." p. 34. Evidently the Maharshi's ideas are all there in the *Upanishads* the *Yogavasishtha* and similar other hoary scriptures. But communicated from a life living in the light of those truths they must certainly have afforded inspiration to those who have sat at his feet and imbibed them. This booklet conveys only reported, recorded, edited and translated versions of some of the Maharshi's utterances. On page 36 we find his advice to the aspirant to read the *Bhagavadgita* always. That is a very valuable advice even to those who accept this book as their spiritual guide. Self-control, inner purity engendered by work and worship, discrimination and other qualifications specified in the scriptures are necessarily to be cultivated before, and along with, the enquiry into, and contemplation on, the Self, upon which the Maharshi focusses all his attention. If anyone thinks that worldliness and the oversimplified Self-knowledge can go together, losing sight of the emphasis which the Maharshi lays upon the annihilation of the ego, he is sure to grope in the dark like Virochana who misunderstood the Self when taught by Prajapati.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### A Temple in Memory of Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj.

Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj passed away on April 26, 1938, at Ottapalam in the Malabar District, at the Age of 72. He was one of those fortunate souls who came in touch with Sri Ramakrishna and received his blessings. For over 20 years he was the President of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, during which time he spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in various places of South India and established a number of monasteries in Kerala. After his passing away it was the earnest desire of his disciples and admirers to open a memorial temple for him. This devout wish was fulfilled within a short time; and now a fine, small temple stands at the Ottapalam Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama situated on the banks of the river Bharata.

The opening of the temple came off on 25th Dec. 1939. It was a grand function which filled the hearts of all his disciples and admirers with great joy. Adequate arrangements were made to receive and accommodate guests coming from various distant places. The day's function, which attracted a largo gathering, was marked by Bhajana, special worship, Narayan Seva and public meeting. Among the distinguished guests who were invited for the occasion were Swami Saswatananda, President Ramakrishna Math, Madras, Dr. K. Raman Thampi M. D. Retired Medical Officer, Travancore and Ambadi Sankara Menon, B.A., B.L., M.L.C., Ernakulam. The consecration ceremony was performed by Swami Sukhananda, President of the Ottapalam Ashrama, amidst a gathering of devotees. In the public meeting convened to celebrate the occasion Sri Nilambur Valliya Raja presided. After the opening remarks by the president Swami Saswatananda spoke at some length about the personality of Swami Nirmalanandaji and Dr. Raman Thampi, who had been in close touch with the Swami all along the period, addressed the audience on the noble works the Swami have done for over two decades. Next Vallattol the distinguished poet of Malayalam, paid his tribute in an elegant and attractive speech. Messrs. A. Sankaramenon, B.A., B.L., P. Gopala Nair, N. Sandara Iyer, M.A., B.L., and Kunhirama Menon also made suitable

speeches. In winding up the day's function the president made appropriate reference to the movement started by the Great Swami Vivekananda and expressed high admiration for the working of its spirit, through various channels all throughout Kerala. The opening of the Temple has helped the consolidation of the Mission's work in the South in a remarkable way as was expressed in the wire received from Sreemat Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission conveying his blessings and good wishes for the success of the function. After the function was over Swami Saswatananda undertook an inspection tour of all the centres in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, and returned to Madras on 25th ultimo.

### Swami Ghanananda's activities in Mauritius

*The following are extracts from local papers we have received, reporting the Swami's activities in the Island:—*

"The advent of Swami Ghanananda to this island will undoubtedly mark a new era in the religious and social life of the Hindus. Hinduism, so to speak, in Mauritius has hitherto been like a vessel without a skipper. The Hindu Missionary movement with our indefatigable and enthusiastic young friend, Mr. S. Sungeelec at its head, has been well inspired in striving to get a missionary of real worth from India. It was high time that such a step was taken. A good number of our co-religionists were day by day becoming unreligious-minded, and were being led astray for want of a proper guide. There was, in fact, nobody who had any real authority, or power enough, to sound the trumpet call that would rally the Hindus together, retain them within the Vedic fold, and bring about the unification so much deserved by the various sects and creeds that compose the great Hindu Religion.....The Ramakrishna Mission has been kind enough to send us a missionary of an exceptional merit, worthy of its world-renowned fame who like a conscientious shepherd, we are sure, will gather the

Hindus within the Vedantic fold. The choice, moreover, has been a happy one; for Swami Ghanananda is well fitted to cope with the work that is awaiting him i.e., that of inspiring that Vedantic life into the dying Hindn body....."

—*Le Mauricien* of 10th August, 1939.

"Swami Ghanananda landed in Mauritius on the 20th of July 1939 and was presented to the public on the 30th of the same month. His first speech made a wonderfully good impression. By his gentle manners, erudition and modesty, Swamiji has won the esteem and respect not only of the Hindu community, but also of the Muhammedan and Christian communities.

"He has delivered more than two dozen lectures in English and Tamil under the auspices of several Hindu societies and two Arya Samaj societies. His lectures are well appreciated, and those who have heard him are one in saying that he is the best orator the Island has ever seen. Addresses of welcome were presented to him in English, in Hindi and in Tamil by different societies in different places.

"On the 25th of August the Swamiji had an interview with His Excellency the Governor. He declared himself quite satisfied and convinced of His Excellency's sympathy for the Indian Community.

"At present the Swamiji is particularly busy putting some life in the Hindu Temples. The Hindus of the Island, having been cut away from the land of their ancestors for more than a century, have lost a good deal of their culture and their traditions. In this respect the Tamilians are worse off. The Swamiji is visiting the Hindu Temples where he has been teaching Prayers. He has compiled a Prayer Book with Sanskrit texts, Tamil transliterations and Hindi and Tamil translations. Besides lectures, the Swamiji gives also interviews at almost all hours of the day to those who want help in religion and culture.

"The Swamiji's speeches are producing their effect. The Tamilians who were fast losing their language owing to the influence of the Creole Patois are making an effort to revive it. And Tamil schools are being started by private agencies and individuals.

"The Hindus of the Island feel pro-

foundly grateful to the Ramakrishna Mission for its spiritual ministrations and for including Mauritius with other colonies requiring its kind services"—*A note on the activities by the Secretary, Hindu Mission Committee.*

"I had the privilege to be among the large gathering which on Sunday heard the Swami Ghanananda lecture on "The Message of India." A slim man with a clean-shaven face, of hardly medium stature and clad in his light-coloured ecclesiastical robe, this young graduate of the Madras University kept his audience spell-bound for an hour not only by the flow of his words, but also by the persuasive enthusiasm with which as a messenger of India, he extolled the thought of his country.

"After a short prayer in Sanskrit, chanted with a classical 'hieratism,' the orator spoke extempore in an academic English, the charm of which was not in the least spoiled by the picturesqueness of a strong foreign accent. We had before us an Indian ascetic who owes his intellectual formation exclusively to India, for though he has shown himself well-informed in European questions, neither London nor any other centre of European culture has yet welcomed him.

"The lecturer presented India conserving intact her national philosophy in spite of all alien conquests. With extreme ability he contrasted the spiritual success of the country which is the repository of the Vedas with the want of political success of India and the Indians. He extolled the ideal of unity pursued for centuries in spite of the necessary divisions, and showed the wisdom of the philosophical system which goes from the religious man to the peasant by passing through the warrior and the middle class.

"A realist full of humour as much as of practical sense, the orator was not sparing of laying bare the deficiency of the bulk of his countrymen in domains where they have everything to learn from Europe: science, industry, general organisation. But if he fervently recommends that India should draw inspiration from the creative activity of Europe in things material, he warns the Indians against forgetting the spiritual message which they are entitled to spread in the world. An apostle of universal brotherhood and an enemy of all

fanaticism, he desires that union should be brought about by the tolerance of all religious philosophies.

"I do not claim to have summed up even the essential things that were said. If you had seen the crowded audience; if you had felt the pride which, quite reasonably, rose from the Indo-Mauritian public towards the platform where its messenger was telling with dignity the belief and ambition of a whole nation, you would have understood that there was something new and admirable in the evolution of our Indo-Mauritian countrymen and which it would be eminently impolitic to pretend to be unconsciousness of....."

—Raymond Philogene in *Mauritien* of 26th August 1939.

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"Under the auspices of the Indian Cultural Association Swami Ghanananda delivered a lecture entitled "India's Message to the World" yesterday at the Town Hall of Rose Hill under the presidency of the Hon'ble Mr. C. Hooper. On the platform were also Dr. Ramgoolam, President of the Association, and Mr. A. R. S. Oosman second substitute to the Procureur General.

In his opening speech Mr. Hooper spoke of the work of the great Orientalists and said how glad he was to associate himself with the function of the day. The lecturer who is a first-rate orator spoke without the help of any notes for an hour and in the course of his lecture took the audience through bye-gone days when Greece, Rome and India were at the zenith of their glory.

"He dwelt at length on the teachings of Hindu philosophy. He underlined the strength of the Western genius in the domain of science and wished that India could draw inspiration from England who possesses the ideal mechanism for organisation, in order that she may better equilibrate her social structure. After he had finished, Mr. Hooper congratulated him on behalf of the audience on his fine lecture which had been highly appreciated.

"The Swami has a highly marked gift of humour, and the uncommonness of his language is equalled only by the elevation of his thought. He belongs really to the lineage of the great teachers of India...."

—*Le Radical* of 21st August 1939.

"The Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission was given a hearty and a mighty reception, by the members of the missionary movement at the premises of the Sunnee Surtee Mussulman Society. Mr. C. C. Pillay presided. The attendance was great and one could note with great pleasure that nearly all the Indo-Mauritian intellectuals had responded to the invitation of the organisers.

"An address of welcome was presented to the revered Swami by Mr. M. Sungeelee, the Secretary of the Missionary Committee. After one or two orators had spoken in Hindi and in Tamil of the benefits of the Hindu, nay the Indian Community as a whole, will derive from the presence of the Swami in our midst, the latter, clad in the robe of the "Sannyasin," rose, amidst a torrent of applause, to voice the great message of India to the world.

"The Swami spoke in English. He told us that religion should be experienced, should be lived. He spoke, amongst other things, of "Tat twam Asi;" "Thou art That" and dwelt on the life indivisible; of the oneness of the universal being. By way of example he said: In hurting a person one hurt oneself, in loving another one loved oneself. On hearing such beautiful things the audience was moved to such an extent that it could not contain its joy.

"The Swami's appeal was dedicated to one and all, to whatever religion or creed they belonged. It was delivered with such an accent, such a conviction, that it literally went to the hearts, and everybody present must have felt a thrill at the message voiced—the one message aiming at universal brotherhood.

"The Swami's speech given out with such an eloquence, and such a mastery of the English language captivated the audience at the very beginning and kept it enraptured with the expectations of encore to the end. It even brought tears to the eyes of the best of our intellectuals.....

"In conclusion we must not forget to especially congratulate the Secretary of the Hindu Mission Committee, Mr. S. Sungeelee. It is he who originally had the bright idea of inviting to this island a preacher of the Ramakrishna Mission; and he actually worked single-handed to bring the idea to realisation, and it was only later on when his object had taken definite

shape that he enlisted the help of his band of co-workers especially for the matter of raising funds. Therefore all merit goes to him if Swami Ghanananda is in Mauritius now, to work for the spiritual uplift of the Hindu Community"—R. S. Naidu in *Le Mauricien* of 31st July 1939.

"Swami Ghanananda, whom we have had the privilege to meet, has just come from India to direct us to the golden threshold of the Vedanta according to the lights of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. A saintly and imposing stature with courtly eyes glimmering behind their glasses, the Swami gave us further proofs of his well-known affability..... One of the staunchest Sannyasis of the Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Ghanananda has been distinguished throughout for his intellectual vigour and courage and power for the ideals he has devoted himself. His is a life of great and religious activity. He has been spending the last twenty years in preaching all over India and Ceylon and doing valuable work for his Mission. We pray the Divine Power that the Swami's mission here be successful."—Arya Vir of 28th July 1939.

#### The Birthday Anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda.

The Madras Sri Ramakrishna Math celebrated the seventy-eighth Birthday Anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda with the usual splendour characterised by floral and artistic decorations, special worship, oblation in consecrated fire, Vedic and epic chants, devotional songs, distribution of food offered to the Deity among devotees, sumptuous feeding of about 3,000 Naranarayanas and a public meeting. The public meeting, which came off on the evening of February, 4, was presided over by Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, K. C. I. E., LL. D. After a brief and impressive speech by Swami Tapasyananda, in which he dwelt on the versatility of the great Swami, Sri K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer, B.A., B.L., read an elaborate paper making an able survey of the contributions of Swami Vivekananda to the regenerate Hinduism of the present day, with scholarly reference to classical traditions. The President in his concluding remarks told that he would emphasise the universality of Hinduism because too often in the strife and conflict of the day, it was forgotten. Where else, except in

Hinduism which was a congeries of faith, did the atheist, the believer and the doubter come under the golden umbrella of religion? They should consider the history of the world and contrast it with that of India. From the beginning of the Christian era, Christians had been the honoured guests of India. Through the ages India had definitely illustrated the saying of Sri Krishna that by whatever path or manner they approached Him, He would be ready to receive them. But greater than that universality was the unshakable courage of our faith—an aspect of which Swami Vivekananda was the embodiment and the exponent. Wherever he went, he preached the gospel of universality and courage.

After referring to the physical prowess of Swami Vivekananda and the emphasis laid by him on the body, which was a "thing not to be despised but an instrument to be used for the highest ends," Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer added that Europe and America spoke of liberty and courage. They had achieved or demanded liberty in the political sphere, but they had never achieved complete liberty and courage in things that did not belong to politics. To-day we in India, were a subject race and we were apt to imagine ourselves to be subject in every sense. We were not. Swami Vivekananda had preached liberty and courage in every sense. He had pointed out that liberty and courage belonged not so much to the outer environment as to one's inner self. Secondly, he was one of those who did not despise what the West would give the East. He had always emphasised organisation and service, which were the glories of the West. He had realised that the West had done important and useful work in organising and co-ordinating the social services. That was where our society and our development had somewhat receded. We had been content to rest on our oars and did not come down from the heights to the market places to move the masses and bring to them our truths. It was one of the glories of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda that they had brought into vogue that regular, systematic, continuous, patient and undemonstrative way in which people could work for the under-dog. Side by side with that, having aroused the nation in that way, Swami Vivekananda preached ultimate faith in the godhead of man and the reliance of man upon himself. He was one of those men who could have sublimated politics and converted the whining of the beggar into the demand of the strong, not turning one cheek because the other was slapped. He would have

made politics truly and not apparently religious. That was why his untimely demise must be considered a great tragedy.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar concluded that we were heirs of a religion of courage, determination, dynamic faith and achievement and should follow Swami Vivekananda in all veneration and prove worthy of his great heritage.

Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachariar proposed a vote for thanks.

**The opening Ceremony of the New Premises of the Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon.**

The Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon, celebrated the opening ceremony of its own recently constructed grand and spacious building in conjunction with the 78th Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda from the 30th January upto 6th February 1940. For the occasion, at the request of the above Society, Swamis Srimat Madhavanandaji, the General Secretary and Srimat Atmabodhanandaji the Asst. Secretary, of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, accompanied by a few other Swamis, had come from Calcutta on 29th January.

The Opening Ceremony of the Joy Chandra Dutta Memorial Hall, where the Society's Library and Reading Room are located, and Chanda Galliara Hall was performed by His Excellency the Hon'ble Sir Archibald Douglas Cochrane, the Governor of Burma, on Tuesday the 30th January, evening in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering. Addressing the delighted audience that had gathered to participate in the function His Excellency said among other things : " It is with great pleasure that Lady Cochrane and myself have come here this evening and we thank you for the opportunity you have given us to associate ourselves with yet another of the many beneficent activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Society in Burma.....

" Carlyle has said that books are the poor man's University and there can be no doubt that wide reading helps to form a judgement which enables a man to recognise the truth and to detect the false.....Moreover one of the criticisms that I have heard levelled against education in this country is that children are taught to read and the habit of reading is instilled into them at school ; but after they grow up and leave school little is done to provide them with books that are worth reading. It is this gap in the continuing process of education—for a man's education should

continue as long as he lives—which a library and reading-room of this sort does much to fill."

On Wednesday, the 31st January, at 8 a. m., the opening ceremony of the temple took place with special Puja and Homa. On that day, in pursuance of a resolution passed in a public meeting to accord a fitting reception by the citizens of Rangoon to swami Madhavanandaji a public meeting presided over by the Mayor of Rangoon was held in the Chanda Galliara Hall at 5 p. m. An address of welcome was presented by the citizens of Rangoon for which the Swamiji gave a fitting reply.

The third day's programme commenced with Chanting of Vedas between 7 and 8 a. m. by the friends and devotees of Bauktaw. From 8 to 8.30 a. m. Swami Madhavanandaji delivered a short discourse on the Teachings of the Upanishads. In the evening at 5 p.m. a large audience was present to hear South Indian music by Srimati Chellammal and party.

The students' meeting in connection with the celebration took place at 5 p. m. on Friday, the 2nd February, with U Tin Tut, Bar-at-law, I.C.S., Chancellor of the University of Rangoon in their chair. After the meeting, the past and present students of the Bengal Academy gave a physical feats demonstration under the leadership of Mr. Chakraberty the well-known physical instructor of Rangoon.

The fifth day's programme commenced with a public meeting of the citizens of Rangoon at the City Hall at 5 p. m. on Saturday the 3rd February presided over by Mr. R. H. Hutchings, C.I.E., I.C.S., Agent to the Government of India in Burma.

Members of the Bani Mandir Club provided an opening Orchestra. U Hla Tun Pru, the first speaker, narrating the chief events in Swami Vivekananda's life stressed on the great necessity of the mission founded by the Swamiji to reconcile differing groups, communities and nations. Mrs. C. K. Handoo, M.A., next read a paper on the spiritual greatness of Swami Vivekananda. Prof. N. C. Das in his speech paid a glowing tribute to the revered memory of Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Madhavanandaji spoke of Swami Vivekananda as a practical Vedantist.

The chairman in his concluding remarks, said : " We have come here this afternoon to testify to our admiration for the work, to our gratification at the progress that the Mission has made and to our gratitude for the benevolent influence which it exerts in the midst of our city, but chiefly our thoughts turn to the teacher, the

Man, who inspired it and guided its infant footsteps. To sincerity and simplicity Vivekananda added a great fund of humanity and it is this humanity which makes the greatest appeal to my imagination.....He was a man of bold and dominating physique and with a strong and impulsive personality.....We see him as quick to indignation at injustice or hypocrisy as he was readily moved to tears of compassion at want and misery. He was a leader and has been described by Romain Rolland as a 'Kingly Man' a 'Warrior Prophet,' and because his spiritual qualities led him to recognise and respond to the Divine in Man he went forth as a soldier to do battle against evil things, against prejudice, narrowness, ignorance, complacency, and poverty and disease which so often distort or choke that same Divinity.....The Scholar and the Saint were there, but Vivekananda's search for God led him to his fellow-men, his religion became something that concerned not only himself alone, but embraced the whole of humanity among which he lived and moved. If his religion is to be termed an "Universal religion" it is so in the sense that Man is universal and it is in Man and the service of men that God is to be found.

We see this idea reflected in the dual nature of the movement which he founded.....: We too in our work-a-day world may find a message of hope and encouragement in a saying of Vivekananda's which is cherished by and inspires the Mission, and it is this: "The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted, let these be your God. Know that service to these is the highest religion."

At 9 p.m. a Bengalee Drama "Bilwamangal," was staged by the Gyagon Natya Samithy at the Ramakrishna Mission Society Hall. The fifth day of the Birthday celebrations started with Bhajana by the members of the Bhavana Ranjita Sabha, Kalabasty, and Vedic chanting in the morning. Between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. about 3,600 poor people belonging to all communities were sumptuously fed. Alms were given to about 260 Buddhist monks (Phonyis) also. From 4 to 5 p.m. Mr. Santibhai Mehta gave a discourse interspersed with songs, on Swami Vivekananda in Hindi to a crowded audience. From 6 to 11 p.m. a musical competition was held in which 42 competitors participated.

A convention of religions was held on Monday at 5-30 p.m. Swami Madhavananda ji presided. Mr. S. O. Daniel in the course of his lucid speech on Christianity, spoke of love and service as the fundamental message of Christi-

anity. U Ba Lwin, who spoke next on Buddhism emphasised the need for true service and stated that the true spirit of Buddhism as understood by him consisted in serving all creatures, human and sub-human. In the absence of Dr. Rauf, his paper which was a succinct presentation of the fundamental principles of Islam was read by Mr. M. A. Raschid. The last speaker was Mr. K. R. Chari who dwelt on the synthetic and inclusive character of Hinduism. The President in his concluding remarks pointed out the fitness of holding such a convention of religions in connection with the Birthday celebrations of a teacher like Swami Vivekananda who practised and preached the principle of the Unity of the Religions. He deplored the existence of strife in the name of religions and pointed out that every religion is capable of leading its votary to God. According to Sri Ramakrishna, what is required is a deepening of our spiritual life and not a change from one religion to another. Thus a Hindu is to become a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, a Buddhist a better Buddhist and a Muslim a better Muslim.

A musical *jalsa* was held at 8 p.m. A good number of artists including Prof. S. N. Banerjee of Calcutta and Mr. Sudhamoy Goswami of Bengal Academy took part. Finally, on the 6th February at 8 p.m. a Bengalee Drama, "Karna," was staged by the workers of the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital. The function came to an end at 12 O'clock.

#### Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Cawnpore (January, 1937 to June 1939).

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Cawnpore, founded in 1920, is a growing and useful branch of the Mission. During the period under review the Ashrama has acquired a site of its own and constructed a few buildings. Regular work had been carried on as usual catering the physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of the people. Religious discussions, Bhajanas, daily worship at the shrine, occasional birthday anniversaries and preaching work constituted the chief items of spiritual ministration. The Ashrama conducts one Lower Middle School, two free primary and one free night school. The Ashrama also maintains a Students' Home where poor and meritorious boys are given an all-round training, free of cost. In the library of the Ashram open to the public at a refundable Security deposit there are 1,200 volumes of books. Attached to

it there is also a free reading room. The out-door dispensary conducted by the Ashrama, treated 1,08,305 patients during the period under report. The Ashrama organised medical relief in Bahraich district after the floods of 1988. The work was greatly appreciated by the public. The Ashrama has provisions for an out-door gymnasium, equipped with upto-date appliances. Moreover, for giving special care to depressed class boys a separate gymnasium has been kept.

During 1987 the Ashrama had an income of Rs. 17,344-7-6, including opening balance

and an expenditure of Rs. 14,288-18-8 leaving a closing balance of Rs. 3010-10-8.

During 1988 the receipts, including opening balance were 11,846-2-8 and expenditure 11,452-11-9, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 399-6-6.

The Ashrama urgently needs more permanent funds to cope with the growing demands on its resources. It also requires Rs. 8,000 to build an operation theatre and two indoor blocks for the dispensary. The library of the Ashrama also stands in need of gifts in cash and kind.

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**ANGER, FORBEARANCE AND SELFLESS LOVE**

The subjoined verses depict their nature and effect in a poetic vein.

बालस्यापि न मे कोपः कदाचिदभवत् क्वचित् ।

मयि गर्भस्थितेऽप्यासीननी क्रोधवर्जिता ॥ १ ॥

अक्षोभविभ्रमसुखं शममाश्रितानि ।

पुण्यक्षमासलिलनिर्मलशीतलानि ।

नो मानसानि महतामहितप्रवृत्त-

दुर्वित्तमन्युरजसा कलुषीभवन्ति ॥ २ ॥

येषां निर्मलशीतलजला सत्वाशयाश्वासिनी ।

नित्यं वैररजः प्रमार्जननदी क्षान्तिः स्थिता चेतसि ॥

द्रवीरारिनिकारकोपदहनजवालावलीविष्व-

प्लावोद्भूतपृथुव्यया परिचितां नायान्ति ते विक्रियाम् ॥ ३ ॥

कृतापकारेऽपि कृषकुलानि क्रूरेऽप्यलं पलवकोमलानि ।

द्रेषोधमतेस्तप्तिशीतलानि भवन्ति चित्तानि सदाशयानाम् ॥ ४ ॥

विषायते तु पीयूषं कुसुमं कुलिशायते ।

द्रेषदोषोत्तरस्यैव चन्दनं दहनायते ॥ ५ ॥

काश्यमैत्रीयुक्तस्य नागिनदेहति विप्रहम् ।

तस्मादद्रोहमनसां न भयं विद्यते क्वचित् ॥ ६ ॥

घोरवैविष्यत्यागात् नैवास्मिन् तपते विषम् ।

महतां चित्तैवमल्यं निर्विषं कुरुते विषम् ॥ ७ ॥

अपराधिनि कोपबेत् कोपे किं न प्रकुप्यताम् ।

वर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणां प्रमाद्य परिपन्थिनि ॥ ८ ॥

स कोऽपि पुण्यप्रशमानुभावः शुद्धात्मनामस्त्यमृतस्वभावः ।  
 यस्यप्रभावेन भवन्ति सद्यः क्लूरा अपि क्रोधविषम्युक्ताः ॥ ७ ॥  
 सन्दर्शनेनैव महाशयानां प्रभापदेशेन शरीरलग्नैः ।  
 हिंसा अपि द्वेषविषोष्मतसाः शमामृतैः शीतलातां त्रजन्ति ॥ १० ॥  
 मैत्रीपविवरमविकारमुदारसत्त्वं  
 सौजन्यपुण्यतटिनी भुवनेषु कीर्तिः ।  
 भव्यात्मनां भवति भूतहितस्वभावं  
 स्वाधीनदीनकरुणाभरणं च चेतः ॥ ११ ॥  
 अमृतमधुरोदारा दृष्टिर्थुतिः शशिपेशला ।  
 तरुणकरुणायत्ता वृत्तिः प्रसादमयी मतिः ॥  
 अयमतिशयं प्रत्यासनः करोति विरागताम् ।  
 विगतरजसां निःसंसारः यियोऽपि परिग्रहः ॥ १२ ॥  
 पीयूषादतिपेशलः परिचयः आव्यं वचः पञ्चमं  
 आचारः शारदिन्दुमन्दमहसोऽस्यानन्दसन्दोहदः ।  
 सच्चिते वसतां सतां क्रिमपरं पुण्यान्मनः क्रोमलं  
 सौजन्यं हरिचन्दनादपि परं सन्तापनिर्बापिणम् ॥ १३ ॥  
 अचलचलनेमन्यलेशक्टाममृताम्बुधिः  
 सुरगणकृते तां तां सेहे प्रसद्य महाशयः ।  
 विमलमनसां कायापायक्षणेऽप्यविकारिणां  
 परहितविधी सम्भद्रानां व्यथापि सुखायते ॥ १४ ॥  
 दुरभानिधिविद्युधार्थनातिविधुरः क्षुद्रधर्थकम्पे चिरं  
 कम्पन्ते च निर्सर्गतः किलफलोत्सर्गेषु कल्पमृगाः ।  
 एकः कोऽपि स जायते तनुशतैरभ्यस्तदानस्थितिः  
 निष्क्रम्यः पुलकोत्करं वहति यः कायप्रदानेष्वपि ॥ १५ ॥  
 फलस्पृहा नास्ति मुने ममान्या किन्त्वेक एव पञ्चरोऽभिलाषः ।  
 यद् घोरसंसारनिममजन्तुसन्तारणायैव भवे भवेयम् ॥ १६ ॥  
 नवं वयः प्रियाः मूर्तिः परर्थप्रवणं मनः ।  
 पुण्योचितस्तथैवायं स्थाने गुणसमागमः ॥ १७ ॥  
 न वियोर्गैनं चोद्वैर्गैनभियोगैः द्विषामपि ।  
 न रोगैः क्लेशशोकैर्वा हीयते महतां मतिः ॥ १८ ॥  
 दानोदयतानां पृथुवीर्यभाजां  
 शुद्धात्मनां सत्यमहोदधीनाम् ।  
 अहो महोत्साहवतां पराये  
 भवन्त्यविन्द्यानि समाहितानि ॥ १९ ॥

"Even When I was a small boy I never used to get angry at any time and in any circumstance; my mother too was free from anger when I was in her womb," (said Lord Buddha). (1) Great men possess calm, steady, peaceable, happy, controlled minds, ever hallowed by the cool waters of spiritual merit and patience; their minds are never stirred to anger even at misdeeds committed by their opponents. (2).

In whose mind forbearance is firmly established, that may be described as a river brimming with the waters of pure and salutary conduct, that consoles the minds of all, and that cleanses daily the dust of anger and hatred, they are never affected by the unbearable pain brought about by the wild fire of infuriated, invincible enemies, opening a flood-gate of scorching hate and flaming rage. (3). Noble-minded persons are deeply concerned with the good of even their offenders; soft as a bud, their minds have a sufficiently warm corner even for the cruel, and they exert a cooling influence even over those who are feverishly hostile. (4). When the vice known as hatred reach the acme, nectar acts like poison, a flower becomes a bolt, and Sandal-wood paste will be perceived as fire. (5).

Mercy and love—if one has a good possession of these, fire cannot scorch one's body. One who has no design upon others has no cause of fear from any source. (6). As he has spat out the terrible poison of hatred, poison cannot affect him. The very purity of great ones' minds deprives poison of its property. (7). If you are accustomed to get angry with the offender, why not turn that anger towards your very bad temper which violently opposes the proper achievement of virtue, wealth, pleasure and freedom? (8).

It is indeed an inexplicable influence, partaking of the quality of elixir and proceeding from sinlessness and tranquillity, which holy souls exercise, and as a result of which even a cruel person is presently disarmed of the fangs of anger. (9). By the very sight of great souls the soothing ambrosia of peace and tranquillity that ooze from their body, and form as if it were an aureole about them, makes cool and calm the ferocious brute fervied with hatred (10). Benign souls are hallowed by friendliness; they are embellished with a mind generous and passionless, compassionate to the helpless and ever under control. Naturally they are inclined to strive for the good of creatures, and their good name spreads into all the regions like a holy river of human goodness. (11). Wonderful! The vicinity to these persons inspires dispassion; for their look is sweet and generous, their behaviour full

of kindness, their mind ever graceful, and appearance shining softly like the moon. To the passionless even the coveted possessions are no more of any worth in this mundane existence. (12). Their acquaintance is more charming than nectar; their words are pleasant to hear; their dealings are as gladdening as the cool rays of autumnal moon. What more to add? When goodness is established in one's consciousness the mind turns as soft as a flower; and loving kindness will chase away all sorrow as a sandal-wood balm assuaging the heated sensation. (13).

For the sake of the celestials the vast milk ocean bore with difficulty a series of torments when it was churned with the mountain rod. Persons who are bent on doing good to others deem pain as pleasure, and do not experience any change even at the moment of physical destruction. (14). The milk ocean distressed at the request of the Devas agitated and trembled for long; even now the *Kalpadrukas* naturally shake while shedding their fruits. Rarely appears one who has learned the rule of giving in hundreds of births, and who, with a firm self and with hairs standing on ends due to joy, gives up himself as a sacrifice gift. (15).

O sage, I intensely long for no other result, but this one: "May I be born in this world only to remove the misery of beings lost in this terrible cycle of birth and death." (16). The springtime of youth, a body that would charm any onlooker, and a mind disposed to accomplish the welfare of others—these are the proper assemblage of qualities; and they are deserved only by meritorious souls. (17). Neither by separation from dear ones, nor through fear, nor even by false accusations of enemies, nor by the exposure to diseases and difficulties, the determination of the great are affected. (18). These persons, characterised by readiness to give, supreme heroism, purity of inner self, infinite truthfulness and great enthusiasm for the good of others, are an astonishing phenomena—their designs are incomprehensible (19).

—*Avadanakalpalata.* (except verse 8)

## NEED OF AWAKENING THE RELIGIOUS SENSE

### I

WITHIN two decades the world has again fallen into the grip of another terribly destructive war. Mankind has not yet completely recovered from the material and moral shock sustained from the last cataclysm, and today once again all cherished human values are threatened to be thrown to the winds. Those that were naively hoping for eliminating all possibility for future wars by waging a mighty war to the finish and preparing the world for perpetual peace are once more disillusioned. The present war has risen out of the very conditions in which the last war terminated. If the last war is held to be responsible for any good, it is the fillip given to scientific advance; but that is only the fabled toad "ugly and venomous" wearing "a precious jewel in his head." The world is still unprepared for peace as it was ever; and no one can judge from past experiences whether war is natural to man, as the Chinese philosopher said, or peace.

The hurry and scurry that the human organism confronts at every moment in our mechanised world—in spite of all its technical perfections—have proved a menace to the growth of wisdom needed for co-ordinating the experiences gained up-to-date from human endeavours, and steering life off the dangers brought on by such blind speed. No man who is within his mind wishes strife for its own sake. What the modern world lacks in, as has been often pointed, is not force or vigour but direction. Maladies of the present

type cannot be remedied by mere political and economic adjustments, however important their value might be in ushering in a better order of things.

### II

The foundation for a better humanity must be sought in the education of the religious sense. The awakening of the religious sense on the largest scale is necessarily a slow achievement amidst the distracting diversities of the present age. But unless that is done, we cannot prevent ourselves from falling into such and many other extremely unpleasant experiences. It is therefore incumbent on the enlightened few all over the world to re-discover the vitality latent in religion and to put it widely and actively into practice. It may be admitted that religion cannot be equated with civilization; but in a sense it is the soul of civilization. The current of spiritual influence proceeding from the efforts of different people of the past ages cannot lose itself in the arid sands of secularism. Let us hope that the present shock at least will sensitise the human mind to the supreme need of a spiritual conception of man and his destiny.

### III

Speaking of a religious sense one has naturally to answer first of all what religion is. Perhaps few other terms of the language is so imperfectly understood and diversely explained. An agreed definition of religion is a recognised impossibility. To our amazement we may note today that the term has well nigh lost its defini-

tive power. Let us therefore agree to define religion in such a manner as to mean thereby only those thoughts, practices, influences and institutions that uplift man from the animal level to the truly human level and ultimately to the divine state.

While to some the term 'religion' serves only to recall to mind the crudities of ages and a host of associations that have stood in the wake of human progress, to others, wise and enlightened, it is the highest pursuit in the world. The question is: Who is to retain the claim over the word? Instead of throwing overboard a well-meaning, time-old term which has long stood for the highest aspirations of the human mind, we would prefer to set it apart for its pure use, dissociating it from the abuses and impurities that have gathered around during its course through the minds of semi-civilised people.

Religion is distinguished in the Webster's *International Dictionary* from theology by marking it off as a subjective phenomenon, and from mere morality by emphasising the fact that the influences and motives to human duty which religion supply are based on the character and will of God. The original definition of religion as "monastic condition" in the *Oxford Concise Dictionary* also points to the subjective bent of the term. While religion is not mere social consciousness, its tremendous social expression is a patent fact. But the social value of religion lies primarily in the individual experience and expression of it. The religious consciousness is fundamentally subjective. However much the concep-

tions of God or Truth may vary in different creeds, their subjective reference is central to religion. While philosophy is of inestimable value in co-ordinating all knowledge and giving the intellectual conviction, it is certainly the religious sense that guides the will and feeling of man in the proper channels and takes him to his highest goal. Reason is at the dictates of will and no volition is free from the tinge of feeling. Cultivation and purification of proper feelings awaken the true spiritual sense. The religious sense operates only when there is the solid foundation of Sraddha or active faith in a reality, born of noble feeling, which has its seat of authority not merely in sensual perception or reason.

#### IV

Faith is the unified action of the will. Perhaps at no other time will it be so much torn as today. The clamorous claims of sensebound existence have riven the mind of man into momentary bits of experience. The silken cord of spiritual unity that binds and directs individual endeavours has snapped, because humanity has succumbed to the power of its lower mind. Apart from the pressure of duty imposed by social and psychological existence the modern man is more and more prone to exercise the least will against the tendency of yielding himself to the fleeting nerve stimulation so variously pandered by the industrial titbits. Faith is gone when the will is slackened; and true heroism—the finest flower of unified life as opposed to the foolhardy dash of momentary impulse—has disappeared along with it as we note in armed camps of nations. Impulsive-

ness may create heroes of war but faith alone could create heroes of peace. Higher or better than the spiritual sense invoked by the noblest ideals of religion there is no power to engender this basic faith in one's divine nature and the perfectibility of mankind individually and collectively.

Next to faith the point which modern world has lost sight of is the spirit of reverence. That has landed us on the border of spiritual death. What the nations require today is certainly a re-education in reverence. Frivolity which is making inroads into the minds of the present generation has often expelled especially in our country the sentiment of reverence. No great work either material or moral can be accomplished by a frivolous multitude devoid of seriousness and earnestness. There can be unity and conformity that can be brought about by external drives; but the human material that enters into such a combination loses all significance; and as soon as the external cause ceases the unity too ends. The spirit is discarded and the material alone is manipulated by outside compulsion. Unless the spiritual unity of all living beings is recognised, as religion insists on, and infused into the minds of men, man can never practice or become the object of reverence. And such an inner recognition of unity based on a true religious sense alone can pave the way for the peaceful brotherhood of nations. Human beings, however they might be drilled into perfection, are not in any way better than machines, if reverence is not inspired into their minds. Religion proclaims unanimously that the deity expresses

through man. This truth alone can save mankind and its religion.

Associated with the two ideas we have mentioned above comes the virtue of holiness. It is more closely allied with reverence. The proverb "there is no happiness without holiness" is axiomatic. Longing for true holiness is the coming of a spiritual awakening. From the dawn of religion, holiness is so closely associated with religion than any other virtue. It is perfection in holiness that makes God God, and the opposite of it is that makes devil devil. Holiness is the fairest flower that blossoms on the plant of life, which has many of its roots in the regions of unregenerate passions and instincts. The value of holiness cannot be upheld when an unspiritual explanation of the facts of existence are deemed satisfactory. Holiness is the sprout of which faith and reverence are the two cotyledons, and out of that sprout grows high the tree of divine realisation. The Hindu and Buddhist conception of Dharma and the Christian conception of charity and love are intended to educate us in holiness. To bring about a better condition in the modern world these three cardinal virtues upheld by religion must become the main concern of youthful ambition.

## V

Although the material expression of religion as a socio-political power is a thing of the past its spiritual kernel is ever alive. With its aid the modern world has to create a spiritual climate in which the lower forces of strife and discord cannot operate. It can and must be done by

conscious effort on the part of individuals. The progress made in the social and economic world should not exclude humanity as to believe only in their sufficiency and the impossibility of making that great achievement. There is still the hope of bringing into this world the light of religion ever present in the heart of

man. But for that faith, reverence and holiness must be cultivated individually and collectively, whether we take the help of creeds and dogmas or not. But these sovereign virtues cannot be acquired unless first of all the religious sense is awakened by instructed appreciation of the best in the greatest faiths.

## GUEST OF DEATH

BY P. K. ACHARYA, I.E.S., M.A., (Calcutta), Ph.D., (Leyden), D.Litt. (London)

[Professor Prasanna Kumar Acharya is a distinguished Indologist and Head of the Department of Sanskrit in the University of Allahabad. In the following article he makes an interesting guess at the meaning of the story of Nachiketas told in the Vedic literature and interprets it scientifically.—The Editors.]

THE modern science which has been making alarming progress in the discovery of various wonderful weapons for a quick destruction of life has, however, failed to solve the mystery of death. Although the exact scientific process leading to the disappearance of life is unknowable, it is more or less understandable that in normal death the various organs and limbs of the body, like the parts of a motor car, are found worn out and exhausted. In extreme old age, when normal death takes place, hair gets loose and white, eyes lose sight, ears get deaf, teeth fall, hands and legs get shaky and the skin gets wrinkly. Similarly the brain does not work, memory fails, digestive function weakens, and the lungs, liver, kidney, etc., and, above all, the heart, or the scientific centre of life, look exhausted or spent up. These outward expressions of old age do not, however, explain the exact situation in which something intangible disappears rendering all other functions stop, "force of

men frail, and his feeble organs destroyed."

In the words of the Hindu Philosophy death is equivalent to cessation of harmonious functioning of the seventeen constituents of the "subtle body" which is but another name for "life". These seventeen constituents comprise five sense organs, five limbs or instruments of external activity, five winds of breath or respiration, intelligence (*buddhi*), and mind (*manas*).<sup>1</sup> The five sense organs comprise the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin, and the five work-organs include hands, feet, anus, organ of generation, and organ of speech. The five winds include the life-spirit (*prana*) itself and four others known as *apana*, *udana*, *vyana*, and *samana*. *Buddhi* or intelligence is separated from *manas* or mind, of which the three elements, according to modern psychology, are thinking or thought, feeling or emotion, and willing or

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Panchadasi*, I: 23.

volution. In this analysis the exact sense of intelligence remains obscure and the idea of life is left unexplained by expressing it by life-breath and other winds. In this analysis only the effect of death or of the disappearance of what is vaguely known as life has been made unnecessarily clear. All living persons know what happens to the gross body (*sthula-sarira*) when the subtle body (*sukshma-sarira*) has left it. But no explanation is available as to why the body begins to decompose and its organs do not work as before when the life has left it. Hindu philosophy, however, has endeavoured to explain the reason for the passing away of the life-spirit, not by any ordinary reasoning but by making a clever assumption. It is said that life takes to a body with a mandate in order to reap the fruit of its past action for a fixed and limited period. As soon as this period is over it must leave the body even when the limbs and organs of the body are sound: on the other hand life must linger on even in a dilapidated body as long as the mandated period is not over. Thus it happens that life goes away from the body of a child or youth while it lingers on in old age when the limbs and organs get exhausted by prolonged use. Thus the expiry of the *prarabha* (undertaken) portion of our past actions in a particular body brings about the cessation of the harmonious functioning of all the constituents of the body, which is known as death or departure of life. What happens to the individual life after it has departed from a body is a matter of theory among various creeds and faiths. Those who believe in the immortality of individual life

(*jivatma*) must follow the course of life's journey after its departure from an individual body. According to certain philosophy, like a rolling stone gathering moss, life accumulates new actions in its birth to an individual body and in order to reap the inevitable fruits of these new actions which cannot be realized in that birth or body owing to the mandated period being over, it has got to take other births. Thus until this cycle of new actions and consequent births come to an end by the cessation of actions and fruits resulting from an annihilation of all desires, there can be no end of moving about of the immortal life. When at last satiety or special concession of that unknown and unknowable mover of the individual lives puts an end to further desires and consequent rebirths, the individual life emerges into and gets mixed up with the universal life or the spirit (*paramatma*). The conquest of death, therefore, is stated to imply freedom from rebirth. But the two most leading illustrations of Hindu mythology indicate a slightly different conclusion. One of these stories is cited to illustrate the conquest of death by knowledge (*jnana*) and the other by action (*karma*).<sup>2</sup>

*Na* (not) *Chiketas* (knew) is a mere boy with a strong body of unexhausted constituent parts. The story both in the *Taittiriya Brahmana* and *Katha Upanishad* vouches for his young age. His vainglorious father Vajasravas Aruni made an unworkable vow to sacrifice everything he possessed with a view to gaining heaven. The wise son who was given

<sup>2</sup> For the second illustration see the writer's article, "Conquest of Death": *The Prabuddha-Bharata*.

the significant name of "Not-knower" discovered that as long as the son was not given away the father could not have sacrificed all his possession. On this demand the foolish father got angry; and in anger he said, "I give you to Yama (Death)." In simple language this incident means nothing else than that the father caused an untimely death to the son. The more curious is that part of the story where it is stated that Nachiketas reached the abode of death without the knowledge of the god of death. The god of death is further stated to have been absent when Nachiketas entered the domain of death. Thus the unexpected and uninvited guest had to remain unreceived, unfed, and unentertained. In accordance with a belief the unfed guest can consume everything of the host, so it is stated that Nachiketas had eaten the children of Yama for the first day, his cattle the next day, and his merits at last. Thus nothing of the Death-god could have remained, except perhaps his godly life which must be taken like every one else's as immortal. To put an end to one's children, one's property, and one's merits must be considered a real conquest.

Thus defeated the death-god sought the favour of Nachiketas and proposed to make peace with him and said:

"I bow before thee, reverend child: I pray thee, crave a boon of me." Nichiketas took pity on Yama and asked of him three boons.<sup>3</sup> As a result of the first boon the child got back his life. In his usual body he appeared before his father in order to console him, because the latter

had got upset, when his anger subsided, at the brutal murder of his own child. Nachiketas felt pity for his father also. So at the outset he asked of Yama: "My father let me living see and reconciled." This prayer was granted. What should this mean? In the ordinary sense it must imply that the child who lost his life-spirit untimely, revived after a temporary suspension of the life-breath. And it was possible owing to the favour of Death-god. Such revival after an apparent death in cases of snake-bite, sudden shocks and other accidents is not uncommon. Reports of such cases are often met with in medical and other journals. It is of frequent experience that by the application of artificial respiration and by using drugs the passing away of life-breath can be prolonged for a while. The well known cinema story of Dr. Jackol Hide indicates the further possibility of bringing back, permanently, life to a dead body. But the body of the story; which was stolen from the grave, could be given only the mechanical power of movement. This revived body like the mythical ghost wandered about causing mischief wherever it went. Ultimately it killed an innocent child who did no harm to the ghost. The moral of the story appears to be that although a sort of mechanical movement or work sense organs can be given in the case of a dead body and it can be made free from decomposition, yet the intelligence and mind for thinking, feeling and willing cannot be revived once the natural life has departed from the body. Regaining his life and body the natural instincts of the child of a priestly family prompted him to

<sup>3</sup> *Vide Kathopanishad, I: 10.*

ask as the second boon, the heavenly peace, happiness and immortality through the performance of fire-worship.<sup>4</sup> He wanted to know what is that fire or energy by invoking which one can gain heaven, or that condition where there is no fear, no death, no old age, where hunger and thirst as well as causes of grief can be easily got over, and thus where one can enjoy peace and happiness, and lastly where people are immortal. This prayer, which would be made by every body, is also stated to have been granted but in a subtle and mysterious manner. The Death-god said, "I may tell of that fire or energy, if only you can understand, O 'Not-knower.' A knowledge of this ensures heaven of above description. Upon this energy the infinite worlds rest. But this knowledge is concealed in a fathomless dark cave (which cannot be reached by anybody). I name this after you, Na (not) Chiketas (knew), that is, it is unknown and unknowable. But I offer you this multicoloured chain,<sup>5</sup> or glass, through which one can imagine to see whatever one likes to see or get."

Shorn of all mysticism the passage means that the natural desire for everybody is to get immortality, to overcome old age, and to have no fear, no want, no privation. The spiritualists believe that it is possible through the performance of Vedic sacrifices, which really means the endeavour to find out that all pervading energy that is revealed in phenomena like the fire. The modern scientists too aim at the discovery of the

same energy, which, if and when brought under control, may overcome death and decay. So far as Hindu spiritualists are concerned, they appear to have given up such an attempt to discover that energy or fire inasmuch as they have frankly named it as Nachiketas or Not-knowing. But with a view to prevent the losing of faith the seekers are supplied with the multicoloured *Srimka* which is variously interpreted as a "Neck chain set with jewels," or making a sound, or "the path of praiseworthy action." This is obviously the same mysterious all-producing tree, the mythical carpet, or the undiscovered elixir or nectar.

Thus the substitutes offered to the Not-knower is as useless as the frank denial of immortality, everlasting youth and unending peace and happiness.

The young uninvited guest of death who has regained life appears to have reconciled himself with the truth that death and decay are inevitable. But when this inevitable death comes and the gross body begins to decompose what happens to that subtle life the departure of which renders the constituent parts of the body unfit for further services. So he asks for the third boon.<sup>6</sup> "When men away from earth have past, then live they still?" the youth asked. He added that according to a school of thought it is held that life exists even after one's death, but according to another it does not exist, it perishes with the body. The verdict of Death-god on this point was prayed for. The Death-god enlightens the "Not-knower" that this knowledge,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, I: 12, 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, I: 14, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, I: 20.

whether life exists or not after death, was sought by the immortal gods, but they too could not ascertain that. Thus the "Not-knower" was asked to give up that desire and ask for something else.<sup>7</sup>

"Death said, 'ask all thine heart's desire;  
Sons long-lived, cattle, gold, demand  
Elect a wide domain of land,  
And *length of days* from me require;  
The love of witching heavenly bride,  
And all celestial joys besides;  
But into death forbear to pry.'<sup>8</sup>  
This passage makes two points clear. The god of death or a physician can aspire only to prolong the "length of days," but cannot make the life ever-lasting.) The other point is that it is useless "to pry into death" of which the exact process is unknown and unknowable.) But the "Not-knower" very wisely and accurately points out the worthlessness of prolongation of a life when the prevention of old age and consequent decay of the constituent parts of the body is impossible:

".....The force of man  
Is frail, and all excess of joys  
His feeble organs soon destroys;  
Our longest life is but a span.  
Wealth cannot satisfy; all zest  
Of pleasure flies before thy  
(death's) face;  
Our life depends upon thy grace."

The Death-god admits all these truths but informs the "Not-knower" that the wise seek the good while the ignorant run after pleasures, and that

for the seeker of Knowledge the highest to know is the relation between human soul and universal soul:)

"Of all the objects men can know,  
The highest is the soul, too high  
For common mortals to descry,  
Whose eyes are dazed by outward show.

Some men have never learnt this  
lore,  
And some, whom sages seek to  
teach,  
Possess no faculty to reach  
That sacred doctrine's inner core."

This is admitted as "a subtle science" which can be taught only by those "who think the soul (individual and universal) as one." Thus unless this theory, assumption, or axiom is taken for granted at the very outset, it is not possible to explain the oneness of the individual and universal soul. With this assumption the nature of the soul is explained:

"Derived from no anterior source,  
The soul, unborn, exempt from all  
The accidents which life befall,  
Holds on its everlasting course.  
The soul survives the murderous  
fray  
(from which Nachiketas suffered),  
Steel cannot cut, nor cleave, nor  
tear,  
Nor fire consume, nor water wet,  
Nor winds even dry it up, nor  
yet  
Aught else its deathless essence  
wear."<sup>9</sup>

(Thus it is emphatically declared that nothing but this soul can survive death. That is, everything else dies except life. Thus neither soul nor life is really explained.) But the con-

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* I: 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* I: 23.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* II: 18.

dition of death is explained by the following familiar analogy:

“ A man casts from him on the shelf  
His garments old, and newer  
takes:

So bodies worn the soul forsakes,

/And new assumes, unchanged itself.”  
But why the discarded garments  
should decompose in the absence of a  
wearer? There is no answer to this  
either from the philosophers or from  
scientists. This, however, lends sup-  
port to our own expectation that as  
long as the body is not worn out,  
death can be prevented as illustrated  
in the case of Nachiketas as also in  
the case of Satyavan.

The “ Not-knower ” was at last told:

“ And soon from imperfection  
purged,  
And freed from circling life and  
death,  
He calmly yields his vital breath  
And in the sovereign Soul is  
merged.”

Thus the third boon was granted. All  
guests of death, all “ Not-knowers ”  
are told by the all-mighty god of  
death that they must take it for  
granted that like the universal soul,  
life, or energy, all individual souls  
are immortal. The life of individuals  
takes to new bodies in order to  
reap the fruits of its own action. The  
action is motived by desires. If by  
one’s own effort or satiety, or special  
favour of God who is identical with  
the universal soul, all desires can be  
ended, the bondage of life will be re-  
moved and it will merge into the  
Universal soul. It is like the mixing  
of water from a pot to the water of  
the endless ocean. This is declared  
to be the highest aim of intelligent  
beings.

It is needless to say that the whole  
story of the Guest of Death is an  
allegory. Nachiketas or “ Not-  
knowers ” are all created beings. The  
god of death, whose one epithet is  
Kala or time, is the time or life. In  
life there are three stages, namely the  
childhood, youth, and old age. Thus  
all “ Not-knowers ” are the guests of  
death for three days or three stages  
of life. The three boons represent  
the three natural desires of child-  
hood, youth and old age. The child  
wants to live, selfishly with the most  
near ones. The grown up youth is  
not so selfish as the child; he wants  
greater enjoyment but not so selfish-  
ly. The Hindu ideal is to enjoy  
youth with all heavenly pleasures but  
not at the cost of anybody else; he  
is an intelligent member of the  
society and the community. Thus  
he wants to get the benefits of all  
social amenities, and as a believer in  
god he aims at getting all heavenly  
desires realized by following the path  
of religion, by performing sacrifices,  
abiding by all social, political, and  
moral laws. But despite his being  
dutiful and law-abiding he realizes  
in old age that the longest life is but  
a span. So is naturally forced to  
inquire as to what happens to life  
after death or expiry of the mandat-  
ed period. These three-fold desires  
of childhood, youth, and old age are  
classified as *tamas* (sordid selfish-  
ness), *rajas* (royal desires for higher  
but transitory good), and *sattva*  
(seeking after the lasting good or  
ultimate truth). It being unknowable,  
the “ Not-knowers ” are advised to  
console themselves with the belief that  
their beloved life does not disappear  
altogether: if they desire to enjoy life

further they will be reborn: if, on the other hand, they give up all desires, the individual life will emerge into the universal life which is unborn, eternal, everlasting, and ancient:

similarly the Knower (of this truth) does not take birth, nor dies; nor does he separate from anywhere (of the universal soul); nor does anything emanate out of him.]

## ST. HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

[We were having the pleasure of publishing several papers of Mr. Koch. His wide reading and mastery of many European languages have enabled him to give our readers the lives of the Saints of different European countries. The following is a comprehensive account of the life and teachings of the famous St. Hildegard.—The Editors.]

### I

IN one of her visions St. Hildegard of Bingen beheld Christ in the image of a giant reaching from the shoulders upwards above the clouds and from the knees down below the earth into the waters of the abyss. And in this vision of a superhuman Christ we find the symbol for the uniformity of her view of the world and of the endeavour of her whole life in the cloister and as a preacher. St. Hildegard in her system of a world wholly irradiated by the Divine always tried to give an interpretation of existence which embraced heaven and earth, body and soul, and for which the torn and harassed soul of modern man yearns with ever greater pain and despair. She, too, might have uttered the beautiful prayer of the Vedic seer:

“Thou art present in sacred flowing streams as well as on the coast-land; I bow to thee. Thou art in the tender grass on the sea-shore as well as in the foaming waves; I bow to Thee. Thou art in the sand-banks as well as in the midst of the current; I bow to Thee. Thou art in the little pebbles as well as in the calm expanse

of the sea; I bow to Thee. Thou art in the barren soil and in crowded places; I bow to Thee.”

This intimate realisation of the unity of all life banished from her mind all ideas of austerities, scourging or withdrawal from life into perfect seclusion. Asceticism and negation never had any place in her scheme of redemption. To her every little flower and leaflet, every streamlet rushing in sparkling cascades over flower-strewn meadows, every golden ray of the sun playing in cheerful mockery with the shadows of trees was a message from God to man's heart and thus of the deepest significance. All plants, animals, precious stones and celestial bodies became psalms sung in His glory and praise, because all came from God and thus ever bore a certain likeness to Him in their essence.

In one of her own beautiful songs and lyrics which she also set to music in the neume notation of her time, the 12th century, St. Hildegard says in a sequence to the Holy Ghost:

Everything Thou pervadest,  
The heights,  
The depths,

And every abyss.  
 Thou buildest and bindest all.  
 Through Thee do the clouds send  
 their drops,  
 Does the air move its wings,  
 Does the hard rock shelter the  
 water  
 And the streamlet flow.  
 Through Thee does the fresh green  
 grass well from the earth.  
 Thou, too, leadest the mind  
 That is drinking Thy teaching  
 Into unlimited vastness,  
 Breathest into it wisdom,  
 And along with wisdom pure glad-  
 ness."

In the Landesmuseum at Wiesbaden St. Hildegard is represented in one of the precious old miniatures of the Codex Scivias wreathed in tongues of fire which encircle her forehead bending down from the heavens, thus symbolising her literary activity as inspired by God and dedicated to Him at all times. According to her own description she constantly beheld a light which appeared to her to be the shadow of the Living Light, and from time to time she was even allowed to recognise this Living Light without intermediary. It was in this light which she did not perceive with her physical eyes that she came to understand all things. The words and voices she heard were not heard as those coming from the mouth of man, but rather felt like a luminous flame or a cloud moving in the clear sky. Her state at these times was not a real state of ecstasy or rapture, but all these visions came to her open eyes and waking consciousness. And just these experiences made her build everything into the whole, into the kingdom of God all around and within her, which she

hoped could be realised here on earth through the "unio mystica" of all.

Our present time is so torn by warring creeds and the glorification of vitality or dynamism as such that it is good to turn to the Great Ones in the field of the spirit to learn from them once more the lesson of unity and existence in God. All through the ages man has been very clever in torturing man both in soul and in body, and few have those been who were fully aware of the illusory nature of these blind impulses—still fewer those who were strong enough to try in self-denial and untiring service to win man back from the enticements of his uncurbed desires and make him turn to absolute values which stand beyond the many hued pattern of phenomenal life. They heard in the stillness of towering peaks, in the frozen rapturous song of the glaciers, in the burnished gold of the larches in autumn, climbing the steepest slopes in a last jubilant hymn of life and ningling their light with the leaping cascades of the torrents, in the darkness of eerie tarns, in forests and glades, in death and in life but the one voice calling them and their fellows back to their home over wearisome paths and wild lonely tracks wending over the bogs of their lusts and desires. They knew the home-coming of life to be the goal of creation, the stillness of the Divine the consummation of all the songs of the world. And wherever their awakening call sounds clearly over the land, there are some human hearts which are touched and forced to follow the voice. They know the truth of the words of the Divine, speaking through Sri Krishna, "He who does work for Me alone and has

Me for his goal, is devoted to Me, is freed from attachment and bears enmity towards no creature,— he entereth into Me!" And they steadily walk in His Light till their end is achieved, looking upon all creatures with the eye of a friend and a helper.

St. Hildegard of Bingen was born in 1098 or 1099 in Bermersheim near Alzey, the daughter of noble parents and belonged to the patrician family of von Vermerszheyen. Her parents sent her to the convent of Disibodenberg at the early age of eight where she later took the veil. After having been abbess for some years St. Hildegard moved with her nuns to the Rupertsberg near Bingen where she founded a new convent right above the mouth of the Nahe river. Of this as well as of the daughter-convent of Eibingen which she established in 1165, St. Hildegard remained the head till the day of her passing away. She died on September 17th, 1179, in her eighty-second year.

Although St. Hildegard's life was but an instrument to be wielded by a supernatural force, she always clearly shows her Rhenish conception of life. To her, the Beyond, in its relation to the world, has always been and still is present in the full joy and certitude of man's eternal sonship. It is as if her character took on some typical traits from the scenery that spread itself out below the Rupertsberg, where, behind the winding river, the beckoning woodlands rise with their softly curving hills and little streams which still give delight to the wanderer. Even to-day a quiet charm penetrates into the heart in those forests of beeches and oaks joyously stretching their

emerald branches towards the sun in spring, throwing a kingly mantle of copper embroidered with gold over the country in autumn, or standing like flaming torches against the background of dark solitary pine-woods. It is a scenery of light and wide open spaces intersected by little ravines and valleys full of shadow and secrecy, wending their way leisurely down to the Rhine and dreaming their quiet dreams of eternity, a scenery enlivened by the river and all its traffic. The river, too, may have awakened in St. Hildegard that love for wanderings and journeys which was to grow so strong that one day the abbess broke the traditional custom of her sex and station in order to undertake trips on foot or by boat or carriage to the Main, the Moselle and the Ruhr, to Franconia, Suabia and Lorraine, where she wished to preach to the people. There is something particularly Rhenish in her character which rebels against the all too great strictness and narrowness of conventional walls, which wants to take up the gauntlet against the world courageously and freely, unhindered by monastic conventions, and thereby transform the world into the kingdom of God. Thus the new ideal of Clunisians found in her an energetic and enthusiastic follower.

Her whole life was carried along by her faith in the harmony of the universe, whereby man is closely related to grass and herb, to animal and stone, because all has its origin in God and exists through God. It is this faith which characterises her mystic vision and message.

St. Hildegard was also a born musician. When passing through the convent she is said to have been

wrapped in a halo of the purest gold while singing her favourite song "O virga ac diadema" to herself as she was wont.

With St. Mechtild and St. Gertrude the Great St. Hildegard stands among the most lovable figures of the women-mystics of the Middle Ages, and she is no doubt one of their happiest and most cheerful saints.

Every true mystic is a poet giving out of the abundance of the treasures stored in his heart. And St. Hildegard also sees things as only a poet and mystic can see them. The wings of her marvellous imagination bear her aloft to the highest heights and down to the deepest abysses. Joined to this imagination there is a rare plastic power in her. But as she had no real scientific education in the proper use of language, all writing meant an untold struggle for her to give form and clearness to the revelations she received. The colourfulness of her imagination made this task all the more difficult. This is the reason why none of the works of St. Hildegard make easy or pleasant reading and why they are carelessly thrown aside by many after some half-hearted attempt at grasping their message.

St. Hildegard often speaks of her manifold bodily sufferings and ailments and of her strange sudden attacks of weakness. Everytime she came up against serious obstacles, her body at once succumbed to the apparently unsurmountable difficulties. Sometimes she even seemed to be nearing death. Whenever her soul pressed her to communicate to others what she realised within, and a certain womanly modesty began to struggle against such publicity of her

innermost thoughts and feelings, God, at least so it seemed to her, punished this resistance through terrible bodily pain and drove her onwards till she once more became a pliable instrument for the expression of the Divine Will. As soon as she began dictating her visions, she felt fresh and healthy, so that those around her were surprised at the sudden recovery. St. Hildegard possessed an extraordinarily sensitive and strongly reacting nervous system coupled with tremendous strenuousness.

Her mind and heart were as deeply absorbed in the supersensual as those of any of her great brothers and sisters in the mystic path, in spite of the great interest she took in natural science and the observation of the world. And in none of the great Christian mystics, tied as they were by their unbridgeable dogmatic dualism and the belief in the fall of Lucifer, is a stronger feeling of unity, of oneness, to be found. When reading her works carefully and with an open, unbiased mind, one is struck by the fact that in her vision there seems to be no break from the highest spheres of heaven down to the tiniest scarcely conscious worm, and that only the strict dogmatic influence of her schooling made her accept the differentiation which to her innermost soul somehow never appeared as a full reality, and which was so strange and repellent to the essence of her own being. It is this fact which makes St. Hildegard unique as a woman in the whole history of Christianity.

When writing St. Hildegard generally dictated to her two spiritual daughters, Richardis and Hiltrudis, or to the Benedictine monk Volkmar

who also finished off her treatises grammatically.

After ten years' assiduous work her first mystic treatise "Scivias" was completed. It contains 26 visions wherein St. Hildegard paints the salvation of mankind from the origin of sin to the victory over hell at the end of time in daring, richly coloured pictures.

In her two works, "Physica" and "Causae et curae" on which her fame as the first German naturalist and woman physician is chiefly based, she interprets the rule of law in nature as a symbol of Divine Life. The unity of creation fills her "Book of Divine works," while in her "Book of Meritorious Life" the system of Christian morals is developed in a dramatic conversation between virtues and vices. Herein St. Hildegard maintains the organic and spiritual cohesion of all that is created so strongly and consistently that she even attributes to the good or evil thoughts of men a decisive influence on the working of elemental forces, a conviction that will not appear strange to Indian readers.

For her, the reciprocal relation between Nature and mankind follows from the thought that God has designed everything else that is creaturely in man; man, however, is the complete work of God, as God is realised and known only by him.

Besides her two short biographies of Saint Disibod and Saint Rupert, mention must be made of a spiritual musical drama, a melodrama showing the struggle of a soul for the virtues—seventy songs, antiphonies, sequences, hymns, responsories, all set to music by the saint herself, as has been said, although she had never

been instructed in music or in the art of composition.

The end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century can be looked upon as the full bloom of the Middle Ages. Everywhere there was a flowering of true Religion, and the mysticism of St. Hildegard of Bingen, Elisabeth of Schoenau, and Joachim of Fiore, as it were, form the triumphal arches of this spiritual spring in the West.

In all these great figures and champions of spirituality the reader may enjoy that holy company which is so necessary in spiritual striving and which he so often lacks in his daily life and surroundings, thereby to gain new strength and determination for his own onward march towards Truth and Love.

It is one of the greatest tragedies in modern life that all these examples of charity and peace have not succeeded in making men follow their footsteps towards a new order and true manhood, and that, instead of realising their incredible strength and self-denial our day has come to consider them spineless weaklings who were too weak and timid for violence and simply took to spiritual life because of their hopeless inability to compete with the stronger members of their community.

The fact that Christ and Buddha were mighty heroes proclaiming eternal laws does not trouble the modern mind. For centuries the words of Christ have been preached from the pulpit, "If any man smite thee on one cheek, offer him the other also, and if any man take thy coat, give him thy cloak also," and for centuries the Message of the Buddha has formed one of the most glorious

truths of humanity: "Immortality can be reached only by continuous acts of kindness, and perfection is attained only through compassion, understanding, and true charity which consists not in giving but in sharing that with which we have been entrusted": yet man still proceeds in his head-long race towards destruction and falsehood, always blinded again by the will-o'-the-wisps of his greed and aggressiveness. May the Divine enlighten all minds and fill them with truth and with charity! May we all learn to be open to Its call!

## II

The following passages with the exception of a short quotation from "Causae et curae" are taken from St. Hildegard's mystical works only, as the naturalist and physician Hildegard has long been surpassed by deeper and truer discoveries of the empirical sciences.

In a letter about her visions written to the monk Wibert of Genbloux in 1171 she says:

"Man is earthly and heavenly at the same time. The good science of the reasonable soul makes him heavenly, but the bad science makes him fragile and dark. The more he recognises himself in the good, the more he loves God. For if a man looks at his face in a mirror and finds that it is soiled and covered with dust, he tries to cleanse it and to wash it. In the same way also, he sighs if he perceives that he has sinned and entangled himself in manifold vanity. Then he knows that he has been soiled in his good knowledge and complains with the Psalmist: 'O daughter of Babylon, miserable:

blessed shall he be who shall repay thee thy payment which thou hast paid us. Blessed be he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock.' (Ps. CXXXVI: 8, 9).

"That is: human circumcision was coated with the venom of the serpent. It is poor and needy because it lacks the meditative realisation of an honourable conception. For although it has a foretaste of the glory of eternal life through the good science, it does not seek that glory and does not long for it. Happy, however, is he who grasps and holds the assurance that he lives through God, and whom his science teaches that God has created and redeemed him, and he who annihilates all evil, sinful habit for the sake of this redemption."

The following short quotation taken from "Causae et curae" strongly expresses St. Hildegard's feeling of unity and the close contact between man and the Divine:

"Everything that is born of God overcomes the world. Thus man does not sin. And as ordinary food through the flavour of spices becomes something better, the fire of the Holy Ghost changes the valueless nature of man into a better one than that which he had by his conception. So man also is changed in his nature because what is heavenly conquers and overcomes what is earthly, so that all rejoices in God and the old serpent becomes contemptible."

The Book "Seivias"—Know the Ways—from which the following passages are taken was written when St. Hildegard was forty years old, in 1140. It is her best known mystical work, although in some of her lesser writings there is greater beau-

ty and poetry of expression and thought and a more dominant note of the deep inner realisation of the Divinity at the back of everything, supporting and animating the whole world.

"I felt the strength of secret mysteries and surprising visions in a miraculous way from my childhood, that is, from my fifth year. But I only spoke of them to members of a religious Order who like myself live in the cloister. I suppressed them till now when God wishes to make them manifest in His grace."

"Man has three ways within him. What does this mean? The soul, the body and the senses. In them man's life is lived. How so? The soul animates the body and kindles the senses. The body on the other hand draws the soul into itself and opens the senses. These finally touch the soul and exert their stimulus on the body. The soul gives the body life as fire pours light into darkness. The soul has two principal powers, two arms, as it were: the intellect and the will, but not as if it needed them in order to move. But it only manifests itself in these powers as the sun does in his radiance."

"The intellect is joined to the soul as the arm to the body. And as the arm with which the hand and the fingers are connected, reaches out from the body, the intellect, too, certainly proceeds with the performances of the powers of the soul, from which it receives insight into all the works of man, from the soul. It recognises more than the other powers of the soul what is good and what is evil in works. One gets insight from it as from a teacher. The soul examines all just as wheat is cleansed from all

that does not belong to it. It considers what is wholesome and what worthless, what is to be loved, what to be hated, what leads to death and what to life. Just as food is tasteless without salt, the other powers of the soul without the intellect are also dull and cannot examine anything. It is attached to the soul as the shoulder to the body, as the marrow in the brain, and as a strong sap flowing in the body. It recognises the God-head, and humanity resting in God as in the bend of an arm. If it has a right faith in its activity, then the intellect is like a movement of the hand wherewith it, as it were, distinguishes the different works."

"The will gives warmth to the work. The soul receives it, reason executes it and the intellect shows whether it is good or evil. The will possesses a great soul-force. How so? The soul stands in the ground of the heart as a man in a corner of his house in order to overlook it wholly, to direct all the appliances of the house and to give a sigh, with his arm as to what is to be done for the well-being of the house. So does the soul turn towards sunrise through all the roads of the body. It, as it were, uses the will as the right arm in order to move the body, for the will does everything: the good and the evil."

"As the fire in the hearth, the will cooks every work. The bread is baked so that man may eat it, derive strength therefrom, and thus be able to live. So also the will is the strength of the whole work. It grinds it in deliberation, adds in its strength the leaven, and softens it by its hardness. Thus it prepares the work in its deliberation, cooks it in its heat

and thereby gives man a more nourishing food than is the bread. For whereas food sometimes ends in man, the work of the will continues till the separation of body and soul."

"The will has a tent in the heart of a man: the mind. It is breathed upon by the intellect, by the will and by every other power of the soul in the strength belonging to it respectively, and they all warm and unite themselves in this tent. How so? If the faculty of anger begins to move and to puff itself up, it sends smoke into this tent and commits the deed of anger. If the ignominious lust moves, the conflagration of voluptuousness is kindled in the material belonging to it and also the wantonness which belongs that sin rises therewith. All this unites in that tent. There is, however, yet another, a lovable, joy kindled by the Holy Ghost, in this tent. The soul receives it full of jubilation and faith and performs in heavenly yearning a good work."

"The soul is the mistress, the flesh the servant. How so? The soul reigns by animating the whole body, and this takes into itself this masterful animation. Were not the soul to animate the body, the body would fall asunder, dissolved. If man performs an evil deed with the knowledge of the soul, this is as bitter to the soul as poison is to the body. On the other hand the soul feels joy over a good deed, as the body feels relish in pleasant food. The soul glides into the body as the sap does into the tree. How so? Through the sap the tree flourishes, puts forth blossoms and ripens fruits. Similarly does the body through the soul. And when does the fruit of the tree

ripen? In summer times. And how? The sun warms it, the rain contributes its moisture to it, and thus it becomes ripe through air that is not too warm and not too cold. And what does this signify? The compassion of the grace of God shines like the sun on man, the breath of the Holy Ghost pours over him like the rain, and the right measure in everything leads him to the achievement of good works like well-tempered air."

"The soul is in the body as the sap is in the tree, and its powers are like the principle of life of the tree. How? The intellect is in man like the green of the branches and leaves of the tree, the will like the blossoms, the mind like the very first putting forth of fruitbuds, reason like the fully ripe fruit and the sensitive faculty like the spread of the tree. Therefore, recognise, man, what thou art in thy soul, thou who throwest away thy good intellect and wishest to place thyself on a par with the animals!"

"Thou, O man, through contemplative knowledge beholdest good and evil. And what art thou if thou soilest thyself in the fullness of fleshly desires? And what art thou if brightly shining precious stones of the virtues shine forth in thee?"

In her "Book of Divine Works" (*Libera Divinorum Operum Simplicies Hominis*) we find many passages stressing the imminence of the Divine Spirit, sometimes even reminding us of the grandeur and majesty of the old Upanishadic sayings and of the words of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita, and rising to the lofty plane of timeless meditations. Owing to the necessary shortness of this survey, only a few of the

most representative paragraphs can be chosen.

"I am the highest fiery power. It is I who kindled all living sparks and who did not extinguish anything mortal. I weigh how it is, I, the fiery life of the Divine Being, flame over the beauty of the fields, shine in the waters, burn in the sun, the moon and the stars, and in one breath I endue every thing with invisible, full, all-embracing life. For the air lives in the green and in the flowers, the waters flow as if they had life, also the sun lives in his light and the moon is kindled anew by the sun after she has waned completely, and then, as it were, lives again, and finally also the stars give, as it were, living in their light, bright radiance. In all this I am the fiery hidden power, and through Me all this burns as the breath of man, also, unceasingly moves and resembles the wind-moved flame in the fire, all this ever lives in its essence, and death cannot be found therein because I am Life."

"I am also reason which carries within it the wind of the resounding word through which every creature came into being. And it is I who breathed everything into this. So none of all these either is mortal in its essence, because I am Life. For I am uncontaminated Life which was not dragged out of stones, which did not take leaves from the branches and which did not take root from its own flourishing strength. But rather through Me all that has life has its roots. For reason is the primal root, and in that the resounding word blossoms."

"I, too, am in office, because everything that has life burns through Me,

and yet I am always Life, remaining the same, life that has neither becoming nor passing, and this life is the moving and operating God and yet this one life is in three forces."

"Thus, Eternity is called the Father, the Word, the Son, and the Breath joining both, the Holy Ghost. This is also symbolised by God in man, in whom there is body, soul and reason. That I am flaming over the radiant splendour of the fields refers to the earth which is the material from which God formed man. That I am shining in the waters corresponds to the soul, because it pervades the whole body as the water flows through the whole earth. And that I finally burn in the sun and the moon points to reason, for the stars are untold words of reason. And that I awaken everything which is with a breath as with invisible life that holds all,—this comes, because whatever unfolds itself in growth, consist of fresh life and does not in any way move from that in which it abides."

"All the works of God are present to Himself before the beginning of time. All visible and invisible things appeared timelessly before the beginning of time in the pure and holy Godhead. So also trees and other objects are reflected in near waters without, however, in reality being in them. But when God spoke "Let there be!" the things at once clothed themselves in the form in which God's foreknowledge had beheld them before the beginning of time, bodilessly, for in a mirror everything exists before it shines, so in the holy Godhead all Divine Works appeared timelessly."

"The devotee has his being in the knowledge of God and tends towards God in his spiritual and worldly obligations. For as a man with his physical eyes sees creatures everywhere, he in faith beholds the Lord everywhere and recognises Him in the creatures, because he knows Him to be their Creator."

St. Hildegard's "Book of Meritorious Life" (*Liber Vitae Meritorum Per Simplicem Hominem a Vivente Luce Revelatarum*) contains her vision of the superhuman form of Christ shortly mentioned in the first part of this article. It is a grand symbol of the cosmic drama of creation and the return of man to his origin, majestically conceived and richly coloured by the poetic imagination which was so strong a characteristic of the saint. Here, too, it was impossible to give the whole vision with all its details. Many parts have been omitted in order as far as possible thereby to avoid breaking the continuity of thought and picture which alone can make the vision living and real to the reader.

"I beheld a man. He reached from the high clouds of the sky down to the depth of the abyss. From his shoulders upwards he passed beyond the clouds into the serene ethereal air. From the shoulders downwards to the thighs he penetrated below these clouds into another bright cloud. From the thighs down to the calves of the legs he was in terrestrial air, and downwards from the ankles to the soles he was in the waters of the abyssal depths, but in such a way that he also stood above them. And he had turned towards the East, but in such a way that he

looked towards the East and the South at the same time. His countenance shone with such brightness that I could not look at it steadfastly."

"The man reaches from the shoulders upwards beyond the clouds into the upper air, because he alone knows in the secret of the Divine Clarity what was before the beginning of the world. For above all and in all God is excellent, because neither the angels nor the souls of the righteous can follow Him to the end. From Him everything that has life has its origin, but He Himself has not even the beginning of an origin, but solely His permanence in Himself. For in Himself He has His Life, His Ability and His Knowledge. He who has the ability, life and knowledge is God. In these three powers rest all the works of God in their manifoldness and perfection, and in Him they have their power for working."

"And God is eternal, and Eternity is fire; and that is God. And God is no hidden, no silent fire, but an active fire. For God's power orders and leads everything like the head does for the whole body, above all creaturely knowledge and all creaturely thinking, into the clarity of His mysteries and secrets. Thus He also creates reasonable life, to wit, there the eyes see, the ears hear, the noses smell and the mouths bring forth words of reason. God thus is the head of all the faithful, but He does not reveal all that rests in the secret of the Godhead, because in Him there is the mysterious life of the hidden Life."

"From the thighs to the knees He is in the terrestrial air. For as every-

thing that is flesh takes its issue from the thighs and is borne and moved along by the knees, everything created is borne by God, too, and nourished in the warmth of the fire and the humidity of the air wherein is all the open life of bodily things."

"From the thighs to the calves of the legs the man stands in the earth. For as the knees bear man up, and as the calves give firmness to the feet, God, too, moves everything alone, strengthens everything, gives strength to the earth, so that it can bear all the other creatures, for it is the strength of all the other forms. For the earth is like the knee or the calf of the other creatures; it upholds other creatures like the wheels and axles of the carriage and leads water here and there, so that it can flow; for if between the air and the water there were not the earth, the air would not let the water flow away."

"The countenance of the man, however, shines so brightly that no one can look at it, because the Holy Godhead is so bright and burning in all good and in every justice that no one can follow It. For beside God there is no God. No one is like Him in any of His works, for in all His miraculous deeds He is the only God, and they are as incomprehensible as He Himself is. He is the fire through which the angels burn and live, and He is that brightness from which the innumerable mysteries go forth that carry with them the miraculous life which is God. And His miracles surpass every number that is in heaven, on earth and in the abysmal depths."

"As the waters and the abysmal depths show the power and the ability of God, the soul of man that tends

towards God also proclaims God's power and ability by its own powers for good works. The soul's powers receive invigoration and steadfastness against the arts of the devil by God's help. God is within these powers of the soul through the power of the secrets which climb down to the hidden mysteries, as it were, from the calves to the soles of the feet, and this in such a way that in doing good works He stands above the soul at the same time, infilling it with holiness through righteous and faithful works."

The writings of St. Hildegard of Bingen cannot be compared with any other mystic treatises or manuals that had appeared in the Christian world till her day. To understand them in spite of the many symbolical obscurities in her visions it is necessary to recall the conditions and religious struggles of her period.

It was during her life-time that Tanchelm of Brabant, the "son of God and betrothed of the Holy Virgin," wandered through the cities and villages of the Netherlands preaching against the worldliness of the clergy and the Church,—that in the region of Trier and Mainz, thus under the very eyes of St. Hildegard, the Luciferians, said to have been a remnant of the Catharists, worked with great missionary zeal calling the people up against the abuses of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the shameless conduct of the priests, through word and example of simple life,—that St. Bernard of Clairvaux preached the Crusade in the Rhineland, enflaming the souls of his listeners. So an unprecedented excitement and religious enthusiasm swept over the whole country. It was

a time when everywhere prophecies, forebodings, visions, secret revelations, genuine and false, cropped up like mushrooms from the soil of great social misery and injustice, oppression and unfulfilled spiritual longing.

Elisabeth of Schoenau in her visions, Arnold of Brescia, Joachim of Fiore, Gerhoch of Reichersberg, all fought in their writings the secularisation of the clergy, the sins of covetousness, love of splendour and ostentation, voluptuousness and greed in the sanctuary of the visible Church. But in many respects St. Hildegard of Bingen is more spontaneous, more original and deeper than Elisabeth of Schoenau and Gerhoch of Reichersberg, and perhaps also more enduring and more forceful than her Latin sisters and brothers fighting for the same cause of the truly spiritual Church.

In St. Hildegard's writings there are flights of rarest beauty embedded between passages of great obscurity or theological dryness, deep discoveries of laws and truths hidden away among Mediaeval superstitions and puerilities, and it is these that

give her personality a lasting charm and value, and which most probably have their roots in genuine Divine inspiration,—timeless and eternally operating.

St. Filippo Neri once said: "Nothing is more efficacious for awakening the spirit of prayer than the reading of spiritual books. When we feel stimulated by a passage while reading it, we must not proceed further, but stop and follow the spirit that moves within us."

It is this fact and the timelessness of Truth which make the writings of the great mystics and devotees of the world such excellent and faithful companions of the spiritual aspirant. And St. Hildegard, too, is worthy of being received into their company.

Country, race, clime, and age can never be a part of Truth, because Truth is always beyond and free from all these, and is never bound by the passing play of the phenomenal. So what is true in the deepest sense in the realisations of the seekers after the Divine, is and remains true irrespective of the period in which they lived and the place where they had their earthly home.

## PITFALLS IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes on the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany, in December, 1933.—The Editors.]

### I

"We see the play of life everywhere. Plants live, animals live and birds also live, just as men do; but he alone really lives, who lives a higher life, who lives for a higher ideal."

Sankaracharya says, "Both men

and animals eat, drink, sleep, procreate, follow the impulses of the senses; Dharma, the path of the higher life, alone differentiates men from other beings; without Dharma man falls to the level of the animal or behaves worse than the animal."

## H

Our ideal should be not so much external solitude, but the inward solitude that we are able to create in our mind wherever we are. This inward solitude is of great importance in spiritual life. Make the mind more and more indrawn, give it a glimpse of the real solitude and practise that at all times.

Prepare the mind through great purity of thought, word and deed, and then begin to lead an intense spiritual life. Solitude is not something negative, neither is dispassion or renunciation. We want to be left alone with God and not with anybody else. We do not wish to be in the company of other beings, but in the company of the Divine, at all times. Merge yourself in God, and then there will only be one, wherever you be.

Narada says, "Realizing God, the devotee is full of bliss. He gets the taste of the highest immortality. He attains to the goal of his life. He himself is saved and he himself becomes a saviour to others."

In a way we make the mind concentrated, but then we do not know how to manipulate it. This concentrated mind will run after sensual enjoyment and all sorts of worldly distractions and objects with all the greater intensity for having become concentrated; so if we do not know how to manipulate it in the right way, it becomes a great danger. It is better not to have concentration if one does not attain sublimation and purification at the same time. Therefore the aspect of purity, of non-attachment and absolute continence in thought, word and deed, has to be stressed so much. I am repeat-

ing this, time and again, so that there may be no misunderstanding as to this fact. Without sublimation of all our desires and feelings we cannot progress in the spiritual path; and if we do not follow a strict code of ethics and morals we should never even attempt at concentration. The concentrated mind that is not purified becomes a veritable demon. The fulfilment of all these ethical and moral conditions is absolutely necessary, and without it all forms of spiritual practice become extremely dangerous and harmful and lead to insanity or a nervous collapse. If you do not follow this code strictly and go in for spiritual practice in spite of that, you will go mad. That is all. Never underrate the danger. If certain attachments and certain associations are not resolutely given up once for all with an effort of the will, no spiritual practice leads anywhere.

## III

The general rule is this: If you have some worldly desire to fulfil, never pray for its fulfilment after you have begun your spiritual practices and meditation. First the desire must be renounced or fulfilled. Then spiritual practice may be begun. It is very troublesome to have a concentrated mind and not to be able to make proper use of it. It is good to have a devil's strength and will-power, but it is not good to use these as a devil. We must know how to manipulate the concentrated mind. I do not even like people to practise concentration before they have already attained to a certain degree of mental and physical purity. It is so very dangerous, and very often people just play with fire. They

turn deaf ears to what they are told and then suffer the consequences.

#### IV

Through leading a life which is sexually perfectly controlled we store up a tremendous amount of energy, and if we do not allow this energy to find expression along physical lines, it finds its expression along other lines. Hence we get psychic powers etc. Never spend your capital. Increase it steadily, but never spend more than the interest. You must increase your fund of energy and avoid all unnecessary friction, so as to minimise the wastage of energy. There may be friction on the other side, in the other person, but that does not concern you. You cannot do anything without perfect Brahmacharya.

#### V

There is a very fine song by Rabindranath Tagore, our great poet:

“Lord, give me the strength to bear Thy standard to whom Thou hast been pleased to give it. Give me the devotion to bear the great pain that is unavoidable in Thy service. Thou mayest fill my heart with the great pain.”

“I do not want even to get rid of this gift of suffering that Thou art giving me with Thine own hands. This misery will be my crest-jewel if with it Thou givest me also devotion to Thee. Give me work as much as Thou likest if Thou dost not allow me to forget Thee, nor my heart to get itself caught in the entanglements of the world.”

“If Thou wishest, do Thou bind me as much as Thou likest, but keep my heart open to Thee. Do Thou not allow me to forget Thee on any account.”

#### VI

All this terrible suffering is our training. The will is to be subjugated, to be controlled, to be burnt, as it were, in the furnace. If you want to do this, take to this life. If you do not, if there is the very least idea of bargaining in you, if you do not wish to give everything, do not go even near it, but do as you please and live as you please. There is no half-way house in spiritual life. For a time you will be between the anvil and the hammer. When the iron has become crooked, it needs hammering all the more. Only then can it take shape. The general rule is: Never to be a coward. Let us have troubles. Let us have untold misery. Let us have unspeakable suffering, but let us face all these and remain unaffected. Let us learn to be the witness in everything.

#### VII

“O Lord, if the doors of this heart of mine be kept closed to Thee, do Thou break them open and come to me. Pray do not go away from me.”

“If any day the strings of my soul do not vibrate with Thy sweet Name, Pray, wait standing, but do not go away from me.”

“If any day I place someone else on Thy seat in my heart, O Thou, my eternal King, do not go away from me.”

“If any day my sleep does not break at Thy call, do Thou awake me with the blast and pain of the thunderbolt, but pray, do not go away from me.”

#### VIII

The devotees should always compare notes among themselves. This is very, very essential. But then we

must be really eager to help one another. We must be really and truly sympathetic. Learn to judge yourselves mercilessly without any destructive self-condemnation. Just stand aside as the witness and look at things as the witness, not as the agent. There should be absolutely no sense of agentship left.

## IX

Very often we find that those who are not able to control their good feelings and impulses, are not able to control their bad feelings and impulses also. We should try to have perfect control in both cases. Even the good feelings, the good sentiments, the noble impulses have to be controlled and to become fully conscious and definite.

If we are able to drive a good sentiment into our very being, it colours it. If we give it expression too soon, it is all gone in no time. The driving power of the engine comes from the tremendous steam-pressure. If the steam be let out too soon, there won't be any driving power left and the engine refuses to move. The steam has to be kept under pressure, otherwise there won't be any transforming power; and if life is not transformed, all these teachings and suggestions have no value whatever. We might much better busy ourselves with other things. But generally people just go on listening and creating some nice feelings for the time being. This, too, is nothing but a form of enjoyment, but not spirituality.

If you are not able to control the noble sentiment that suddenly rises in your mind, you will succumb to the bad or impure sentiment the very moment it rises in it. First create

capital with great doggedness. Then spend the interest. But first you must possess a large amount of accumulated capital, otherwise if you spend out of your capital, you will end in bankruptcy.

Have tremendous feeling, but be a master of your feeling. And if a feeling brings about a sort of nervousness you may be sure that there is something seriously wrong with that particular feeling or with its object. Swami Brahmananda had tremendous feeling, but the greater the pressure of the feeling, the more he controlled it, the calmer his mind used to become.

## X

Tenacity is wanted. A balanced mind is wanted. Always. There should be tremendous intensity coupled with great calmness and steadiness. There should be tremendous will-power and determination coupled with great peace and self-assurance.

Those who are hasty or careless cannot go in for spiritual practice. Tremendous doggedness is needed. Even if He should tear me to pieces, I am going to cling to Him and to Him alone. I do not care what happens, but I shall not give up clinging to Him. That is the proper attitude.

"Whether He embraces me and makes me His slave, or crushes me down or chooses to keep company with others, discarding me,—He is ever the Lord of my heart and none else."

"O Lord, I have no desire for wealth, for men, for beautiful women, for the gift of poetry. But I pray that from birth to birth my motiveless devotion to Thee may continue."

## XI

A partial awakening of the Kundalini is a very dangerous, as it brings tremendous sexual reactions. Therefore first have ethical culture.

Swami Brahmananda says, "Swamiji used to say that a little awakening of the Kundalini is very dangerous. Until She rises up higher, lust, anger and other lower passions become very disturbing. The Vaishnavite Sadhana of Madhur Bhava or Sakhi Bhava is exceedingly dangerous. In trying to remember constantly the story of Sri Krishna's Divine play with Sri Radha, the Vaishnavities cannot control their lust and they do all sorts of lecherous acts. Hence the restriction for the beginner in reading Rasa-Lila and such works. Meditation is not an easy thing. Eat a bit more and your mind will not settle that day. When lust, anger, greed and the whole host of evil passions are kept under control, then and then alone does meditation become possible. If any one of these asserts itself, meditation will be impossible."

All thoughts and impulses that flow in a contrary direction are impediments to meditation. So they must be controlled and slowly minimised and annihilated. External penance is far easier than to control and purify the mind.

## XII

There are a good many people who think they can leave religion for their old age after having enjoyed all the fruits of life. But for them the time never comes, because after having wasted the greater part of their energy in physical enjoyment, they begin spiritual life much too

late to be able to achieve anything. Their whole life had been in vain, and they all suffer for it.

Never say, "O, my mind is so restless. How is it possible for me to meditate?" Just because your mind is so restless you must meditate, all the more. A perfectly calm mind does not need so much meditation.

The really thirsty man always needs water, but those who are not thirsty can do without it for a long time. The really sincere aspirant will do all he is told, but we are so half-hearted and so little sincere, that we are in no great hurry to follow the advice we are given.

And then, we want the purest water, not adulterated water, or water that has become terribly dirty. We should rather feel really thirsty than go in for anything that is not good and pure.

Sri Chaitanya said, "Even if You trample me underfoot, even if You break my heart, I would know that You and You alone are my Beloved."

"Even if I am to pass through various lives and through the greatest of miseries, O Lord, let my mind be turned to Thee and Thee alone."

And then there is the beautiful prayer of Kunti: "Lord, give me misery and yet greater misery, for when we are in the midst of misery, we are made to think of Thee more and more."

## XIII

Divine Love can never be judged by the standard of our worldly prosperity. Wherever the Lord Himself becomes the charioteer, success is assured. When the devotee allows

himself to be guided by the Lord alone, then alone success is assured. This is the real meaning and significance of the Bhagavad-Gita. Nothing short of that will do, but it takes a long time to attain real self-surrender and renunciation.

There can be no security in our life unless we have attained the ultimate goal, *i.e.*, self-realization. Any devotee may tumble down at any moment before he has attained the

ultimate goal. So we should all be very careful and strictly follow the advice we have been given. Do not have worldly or useless discussion either amongst yourselves or with others. "Only that kind of discussion that helps us in arriving at the Truth can be taken recourse to, not others." Sri Ramakrishna used to dislike all empty discussions very much and warned all his disciples of their danger.

#### XIV

"Speed forth, O Soul ! upon thy star-strewn path;  
Speed, blissful one ! where thought is ever free,  
Where time and space no longer mist the view,  
Eternal peace and blessings be with thee !

Thy service true complete thy sacrifice,  
Thy home the heart of love transcendent find;  
Remembrance sweet, that kills all space and time,  
Like altar-roses fill thy place behind !

Thy bonds are broke, they quest in bliss is found,  
And one with That which comes as Death and Life;  
Thou helpful one ! unselfish e'er on earth,  
Ahead ! still help with love this world of strife !"

*Swami Vivekananda.*

#### IDEALISM IN AESTHETICS

BY K. KRISHNAN NAIR, M.A.

[Reality is experienced spiritually, morally, aesthetically and scientifically. The truly religious expression of it integrates the whole and builds a world-view on the basis of that complete vision. That alone could give unity to the whole life of man. The position adopted below in examining the claims of aesthetics is thus one subordinated to the need of a total integration without belittling the importance of other aspects of life. The writer had a brilliant academic career, and after passing the M.A. Examination in the first rank is now prosecuting higher studies.—The Editors.]

WHAT is the standard by which we shall measure the greatness of art? If it be beauty, does it necessarily lead to an irreconcilable hostility between our devotion to art and our thousand other obligations, civic, political and ethical? Shall we be asked to be the bond-slaves of a goddess who shall command us to forget that life in its many sidedness

is greater than art, which is related, at any rate, to only one aspect of our personality, the aesthetic?

To answer such questions we must first of all know a little of the psychology of the operative process of aesthetic perception. Then only can we realise how forces and tendencies peculiar to the receptive medium interfere to a startling extent with the ideal mode of art-perception.

A work of art is an entity in which the artist has consciously given objective expression to a feeling he has experienced. Objectivity demands a medium of expression which is more or less permanent and is detatched, and separate from the creative genius, as such; that is, it must be capable of being perceived not only by the artist himself but by others also. The aesthetically receptive attitude, which is not the purely cognitive one but is contemplative as well, must result in the re-experiencing of the feeling of which the work of art is the objective expression. And beauty is a judgement, conscious or unconscious, on the qualitative aspect of the feeling experienced. If the feeling is pleasurable, the work of art is said to be beautiful, otherwise, ugly, although it retains still the status of a work of art. Beauty is thus a judgement of immediate value.

The feeling derived from contemplating any work of art is a joint function of its nature and the individual's psychological constitution. Now, the human mind has an affinity for pleasure. Confronted with any object, it attempts to extract from it, and if need be, modifies the object in order to be able to extract from it, contribution of pleasurable feeling.

This tendency of the mind is stimulated when it is confronted with works of art, which, by long association, have come to mean the proximity of pleasurable feeling. The difficulty, here, however, is that it does not contemplate the work of art passively, but attempts to modify it. It may do this in several ways.

From the total aesthetic object, which the artist has presented, it may select unconsciously those elements alone, which make contributions of pleasurable feeling. The rest of the elements may not even be perceived. How many of us manage to notice the complete details of a landscape painting? Thus the aesthetic object is not perceived in its totality, and a judgement of quality, consequently, cannot be valid in the sense we would like it to be.

In a work of art, all the separate elements that go into its composition will not be of equal importance in objectifying the feeling of the artist. Where the work is primarily one of design, the artist objectifies his feeling mainly through the distribution and manipulation of the spatial or temporal relationships of the objects represented and not availing himself of the innate significance of the objects themselves. The mind has, however, a marginal and focal awareness, and no artist, however optimistic, can legitimately expect that those constituents over which he has distributed very little emphasis will be conveniently overlooked by the persons who contemplate the work. He can only hope for a minimum of attention on these factors, but it does not follow that his hope will be fulfilled in every case.

To give an illustration: Grace is the aesthetic value that action has in so far as it is evidently easy, economical of effort, adequate. "Grace" writes Schopenhauer, "is the adequate representation of the will through its temporal manifestation, that is to say, the perfectly accurate and fitting expression of each act of will, through the movement and position which objectify it." This account of the graceful, Schopenhauer points out, explains why, for effects of grace in the human body, nakedness in which the action is more fully evident is virtually a necessity. Now nudity, when it is not accompanied by a context of neutralising effects, such as a religious attitude in the beholder—there was no danger to the Greeks in contemplating the undraped figures of their gods and goddesses—is a powerfully excitatory factor, and attention cannot be focussed on the grace aspect of the work of art. We talk of toleration and justice among men. But we have been shamefully unjust to the gods. With the decline of Greek culture, these ancient gods and goddesses became cheaper than mortals, became like so much designs on the wall paper and the French artists made capital use of them in making pornographic representations to add zest to the guilty amours of their monarchs and their innumerable mistresses. Incidentally, here it is that the fundamentally different attitude of Indian Art is revealed to better advantage. The wood nymph at Sanchi is no goddess. She is nude. Yet how infinitely more pure is our spontaneous reaction to this graceful and sprightly sculpture than to the Venus of Georigone or Velasquez.

On such occasions then, where entities not strictly aesthetic (at least relative to the particular work of art) intrude into the field of aesthetic contemplation and make separate contributions of feeling, a judgement of quality is very likely to be unsound.

We have not yet finished cataloguing the sources of danger. The aesthetic object may have for us purely accidental significances which affect the quality of its feeling export. A few flowers might have been painted by the artist to represent an offering to the gods. But it is not unlikely that those particular blossoms will have a purely accidental reference to some romantic episode in the life of the beholder. Where this significance is consciously perceived the spectator is not likely to confuse the feeling he actually experiences with the native feeling import of the work of art. But this association may be unconscious. In fact, on more occasions than we are likely to suspect, this associative factor operates unconsciously, tapping a realm of feeling which is potentially vast. To such association George Santayana has given the term "Expression." "In all expression," writes Santayana, "we may distinguish two terms; the first is the object actually presented, the word, the image, the expressive thing; the second is the object suggested, the further thought, emotion or image evoked, the thing expressed. The value of the second term is unconsciously incorporated in the first." It is to this mysterious expressional factor that we must attribute the extraordinary power of music to bring to us strange fancyings, novel sensations that somehow seem

very familiar, and recollections which are yet dim and vague like the after taste of dreams. Now, what is important here is that expression is due to the survival of an experience and hence is valid only to the individual. Here also, an aesthetic valuation has the chance to become extremely prejudiced and subjective.

Now let us take the ideal case, where these pitfalls have been avoided. Even here it is possible to show that a judgement of quality pronounced on art with beauty as the standard has little or no objective validity, as a measurement of its greatness.

"Experiments on sensation states," writes Professor Mark Baldwin, "especially on the apprehension of usual forms, result in showing that wherever there is a union of elements readily and easily brought about, wherever integration is effected without strain to the organ stimulated at the time that the elements preserve their individuality in a measure, we experience pleasure. In perception, a similar principle is found, known as assimilation. When a new experience is assimilated readily to old categories and fits into ready moulds of experience, thought or conception, then we invariably experience pleasure—not the pleasure of pure identity, but of progressive identity—of a process in consciousness."

The perception of beauty, then, fluctuates with character and personality. It varies with individuals and with the same individual at different periods. To regard a pleasurable reaction in us as the final verdict on the greatness of a work of art is to dogmatise that what

is calculated to arouse pleasure in our particular psychological organisation is necessarily great, or in other words, that we have become perfect. Thereby we are shutting off all possibility of growth. But growth is a thing which is necessary even for the primary art of perception of a work of art. We do not ordinarily accept the verdict of a boy whose mind cannot yet appreciate the grandeur of space-time relationships, pronounced on the "Nataraja Murti." The mere perception of the symbolism behind the Nataraja demands a certain condition of growth in us. The mind, which once could not move easily among these concepts, learns to appreciate their immensity, is exalted by the vision of the gigantic energy of Ascending Life and Descending Life, of creation and of involution, operating in an immense ring of time and vast fields of space, emanating from and flowing back finally to its Central Source. The mind has grown and has perceived sublime beauty, where once in its unripeness it did not.

Let us acknowledge our imperfections and be suspicious to a little extent of our own present judgements. We have not reached the top of the hill. We have yet a long way to traverse. We have to grow. The aim and end of life is growth. But growth is not vegetating. It demands an Ideal, a chalked out route. In the final analysis, the function of Religion and ethical systems is but to point out this way, to prescribe a system of conduct which will promote the advancement of collective happiness. But the first condition of growth is that we should understand and react with pleasure to these precepts. It

must be an obedience through love and understanding. Otherwise, Religion will have degenerated into dogma and superstition, or we will have degenerated into slaves; slaves, who might be doing good, but are doing it under compulsion. When once we have shaped our life anew in the light of our ideal, judgement of art is easy. With the termination of the contemplative mood, the feeling experienced from a work of art acquires an effective status, becomes an impulse, a seed of conduct. This impulse and the action to which it will lead can be judged in the light of our ideal. And the true greatness of art shall depend on this verdict.

And if our attachment to the Ideal dictates with pleasure, the outcome will be this. We will have made our lives noble and will perceive Beauty in things that are great and noble. The good shall become the beautiful for us. This is no impossible transformation. Mortals have achieved it in the past. Even in our own age instances are not wanting. The various spheres in which our personality functions, the practical, social, ethical and esthetic, will have been integrated harmoniously. We will have attained true culture; for, as Sri Aurobindo points out somewhere, culture is nothing but this harmonious integration.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

1. *Yogic Home Exercises: By Swami Sivananda, 2. Yogic Asanas for Health and Vigour: By V. G. Rcle, L.M. & S, F.C.P.S. Both Published by Taraporewala Sons & Co., Treasure House of Books, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay. Price Rupees Three and annas twelve for each. Pages 84 and 113 respectively.*

The first Part of *Yogic Home Exercises* contains, following an Introduction setting forth the aim and scope of the work at length, three chapters entitled "Science of Body Structure," "Health and Hygiene" and "Brahmacharya." The second Part deals with 20 Yogic exercises, with actual photo reprints illustrating them and also Pranayama and Relaxation. The book is rounded off by an Appendix treating of the goal of life, control of mind, thought and senses, meditation, and allied topics. "Asanas are not mere physical exercises. They are something more than that. They have a spiritual basis." p. 52. Only less than half the book deals with the bodily poscs. The remaining portion gives in the light of knowledge gained from human physiology, physical and mental hygiene, and spiritual and religious practices, a succinct and lucid explanation as to how

one might build up sanc, simple, healthy habits in respect of one's daily physical and mental needs, conduct and attitude towards life. Asanas, of course, have a great physiological and psychical value but to claim that they would bring everlasting youth—as the fabled Chyavana succumbing to old age got after the dip into the miraculous pool—is incredible as the story in which it is told that the glee of the cat remained even when the cat moved off. The perishableness of body being such a compelling and universal law, how can youth be everlasting? While extolling the spiritual and therapeutical virtues of fast, anxious and discontented power-hunters are appraised of a golden opportunity. "By fasting you can influence anybody. By fasting you can make Indra and other Devatas to serve you." One is advised to practise vigorous meditation (p. 29) from the third day of a complete fast for a week or so, as there will be no hunger and appetite from that time and the senses will be calm. *Bhagavad Gita* (VI: 16), however, informs that Yoga is not for one who eats too much, or one who does not eat at all. Medical science also will tell us that it would not

be advisable to overstrain the brain when the body is rendered extremely weak by protracted starvation. The possibility is of course separate matter. Active meditation demands increased blood circulation in the brain; meditation of an enfeebled body must be a coma state. So for spiritual aspirants the golden mean is always better than painful self-torture imposed by absolute starvation for long periods, his aim not being occult, medical or political gain. On page 52 the Swami gives a sovereign advice to which we call attention above all: "Common sense should be used throughout your practice."

Even though one may find it inconvenient to follow some of the counsels given to the aspirant, as the building of one's house on the western bank of a river, lake or tank (p. 17), to expose the wide open mouth to the rays of the rising sun and to allow the rays to penetrate into the nostrils (p. 18), and some other practices which may require more accurate guidance from a person well versed in the subject and always present with the person who practices, there are enough instructions in the book really valuable and surely beneficial to anyone who has the picture of a better life before him. It is on the whole a compendium of easily adaptable and ordinarily useful information necessary to keep oneself sound in body and mind, and conducive to the cultivation of a higher life. The book is nicely printed and got up. However, many mistakes have crept into the transliteration of Sanskrit terms. We bid a wide circulation for this simple, direct and useful book on practical Yoga.

Dr. Rele's *Yogic Asanas*, although it covers almost the same ground as the section in the above book dealing with the Asanas, is altogether a distinct work by being a scientific, up-to-date exposition rigorously submitting to the demands of logic and reason. Lt. Col. Bhatia rightly congratulates the author, in the Foreword contributed by him, "on the clear exposition and the sound psychological interpretation which he has presented here." "The chief object of this book," it is announced in the blurb, "is to impress on the reader how the vicissitudes of middle life react unfavourably on health and how the practice of *asanas*—the well-known

poses—..... counteract this tendency towards ill health..... The author has endeavoured to show the psychological importance of the *asanas* from his own personal experiences....." A perusal of the book will reveal that the writer has succeeded in obtaining this objective. The main difference between Yogic physical culture and the systems approved in the West is that "the latter are mainly concerned with the superficial visible development of the body while the former is mainly concerned with the toning up of the invisible activities of the body including the mind which regulates the well-being of the whole body through the intricate nervous system."

The body of the book falls under four main divisions: Introduction; Middle Age—The Bogey that Deteriorates Health; The Way to Keep Fit or The Technique and Practice of Asanas; and The Collective Physiology and Therapeutics of Yogic Asanas, followed by Conclusions and Bibliography. His well-reasoned explanation of the causes of deterioration in health deserves to be read by many a well-to-do modern man easily settled in life. He rightly emphasises "that our faulty environments, faulty diet, indoor sedentary occupations, unhygienic surroundings, the hurry and stress of modern life, our emotions and sorrows, all upset the proper functioning of our involuntary organs long before any other tissue in the body, and affect the mind to make to lose its psychic balance," and enjoins on all labouring under such conditions great vigilance and care to avoid the diseases that steal upon the body simply due to want of knowledge.

There are 44 photographic illustrations clearly indicating the different stages involved in mastering the technique of each Asana. Only some 17 Asanas are taken up and they have been described with such care that one may try them oneself as a system of physical culture. However the author correctly and wisely warns: "Before going in for Yogic physical culture exercises one should get oneself examined thoroughly by a competent medical man in order to be quite sure that no organic disease exists." (p. 8). He has selected from the 84 Yogic Asanas such Asanas that "may be practised as a full

course by any one in good health," and that too in the beginning atleast preferably "under the guidance of one who has gone through the whole course of poses himself." (p. viii),

The last section dealing with the collective physiology is an illuminating and instructive account of the effects of those practices on metabolism and on circulatory and nervous system, helping to rectify their defects. "The prevention of the deterioration of health is better and wiser than trying to make oneself fit again after a break down." (p.22). This is certainly a golden motto for all. While the first book under review is not so scientifically thorough, it prescribes an elaborate religious discipline emphasising on Brahmacharya, diet, fast, meditation and allied subjects. In this work all that is summarised by insisting on moderation in everything and eschewing completely in daily life those things that may be grouped under vices. (p. 4). We recommend the book to all scientifically minded people who wish to know on the subject, both in the East and in the West.

**\* Paramarthadipa or Gururamanavachanamala** (Sanskrit): *By Lakshmana Sarma. Pudukotah New Publishing House, Pudukotah. Pages 72. Price as. 8.*

In about 350 "Arya" verses the author summarises in this booklet the instructions of Sri Ramana Maharishi given to the spiritual aspirants. The verses are smooth-flowing and lucid. We hope scholars of Sanskrit will appreciate the

Vedantic teachings of the Maharsi in this dignified classical garb.

**Naradabhartisutram (Tamil):** *By Guhadas, Guhalayam, Chengalipuram P.O. Pages 104. Price as. 12.*

The famous Bhakti text of Narada is given in Devanagari script and a simple translation into Tamil is subjoined to each aphorism. Within the covers of the book the purchaser would get also the famous "Bhajagovindam," of Sri Sankaracharya with transliteration and translation into tamil and also a tiny treatise called *Atmanusomadhana*.

**Dasanatu Atmanubhavam Part I (Tamil):** *By the above author. Pages 152. Price Re. 1-4-0.*

The book describes the methods of religious practice in a lucid manner.

**Sri Sri Ramakrishna Stotra Gita (Bengali):** *Published from the Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Matri Mandir, Sri Yogavinod Ashram. Simultala, E.I.R. (Second Edition). Pages 18. Price not stated.*

This is a collection of short hymns and songs on Sri Ramakrishna. Most of them are in Sanskrit, but in Begali script.

**Thakkurer Namamrita or Ramakrishna Sangit (Bengali):** *Published by Swami Yogavilas, Yogavinod Ashram, Simultala (Munghir). 9th Enlarged Edition.*

Here is a collection of about 150 best Bengali Songs composed by the famous devotees and poets of Bengal, in the last century, and were regularly sung in the assemblies where Ramachandra Dutt used to give religious lectures.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### OBITUARY

*The following communication has been received from Swami Anantanandaji, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bombay.*

We feel sad to record the sudden passing away of Mr. J. M. Bilmoria, on Tuesday, the 12th March, 1940, at 8 p.m., at his Banoo Mansion tenement, Cum-bulla Hill, Bombay. At the time of death he was nearly three score and sixteen. He had lost all his children long before, and

now leaves behind only his aged wife to mourn his loss.

Tall, fair and square built, Mr. Bilmoria was a man of noble bearing, and withal possessed a magnanimous heart and a charitable disposition, which readily responded to the appeal of poverty and affliction from all quarters irrespective of creed, community or station in life. And with this he had a strong aversion to any public demonstration or even mention of his charities. Thus the few lacas of rupees which

he gave away to different religious and charitable Institutions and Societies, besides personal benefactions, were little known to any except the giver and the receiver. And as we knew him, in giving charities, he hardly reserved any thought for his personal considerations—himself content to live a life of unassuming simplicity and honesty of purpose.

Great and commendable as all this is, his life has yet another tale to carry, which we know will be of interest to many. This is one more instance of how inscrutable are the spiritual forces at work in humanity, and how the good graces of a real spiritual soul work in the life of man, bringing to fruition in their own time its potentialities in undreamt-of ways.

In the year 1897, when the great Swami Vivekananda, after his historic mission in the West, was touring the length and breadth of India and rousing the country from her age-long stupor to visions of her great destiny by his inspired public orations, and was at the time moving the public of Lahore, young Bilmoria—then in his early thirties—was engaged in commercial business there. Youthful, ambitious and gay, Mr. Bilmoria had little interest in what was going around except his business and day to day pursuit of life. But, one day this young Parsee, while out on business, was attracted by a huge gathering near by and proceeded up to see the fun at close quarters. His eager eyes in search of the centre of attraction caught those of Swamiji's, while the latter was being led to the dais. Instantly, Swamiji stepped out of his way through the crowd and stood in front of Bilmoria, gracefully looking up to him and enquiring if he were a Parsee and wherefrom he hailed. With these simple personal enquires, Swamiji closed this short passing talk humorously saying the half-mysterious words "we also speak a language much similar to yours" and illustrating his remark by a few affinities of the Bengali and the Gujarati languages, and went back his way. Not a little dazed, young Bilmoria kept wondering as to what this great man might mean by so accosting him in an unceremonious way. He tarried a while and then went his way without evincing any more than a passing interest in the remarkable and magnetic personality as well

as his spoken words. With the lapse of time not an impression of all this remained there on his conscious mind. But it was not to be hidden or lost for ever.

Years hence, there were reverses in his business at Lahore and he shifted to Bombay. Meanwhile came his great bereavements in life, and to seek consolation he opened his heart to charity. For sometime it became his daily practice always to carry in his pocket a large quantity of small changes and distribute them freely to beggars in streets.

It was about this time, just on the eve of his retirement from business in 1922, that he happened to pass one day by a Book-shop, and quite casually his attention fell on a board advertising Swami Vivekananda's Complete Works, with a picture of the Swamiji displayed thereon. Suddenly lost memories were brought back to his mind and he remembered the whole scene of his strange meeting with the Swamiji. Mr. Bilmoria purchased the full set of the Works and came straight home. This marked the great turning point of his life, and a new chapter opened up before him. As he kept pouring over these volumes his heart was constantly seized with regret at the thought of the great opportunity he had lost in life. He then thought of making enquiries about the Swamiji, or at least to be put in some living link with him, and so wrote to the Publishers of the Swamiji's Works. The Bombay branch of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission had just been started and he was, in reply, referred to the President of this Ashram. Thus came to be established his connection with the Bombay Ashram which lasted to the end of his life. He cherished and remembered with feeling the first day of his visit to the Ashram and its President, whose kind and solacing words and benedictions helped to lift up his pining spirits. This was the beginning of a great transformation that continuously showed itself in his life and outlook. His charities were no longer acts of mere compassion but were inspired by thoughts of humble service and pious offering; thoughtless and wayward living gave place to quiet retirement and calm contemplation; consolation deepened into ardent devotion and raised his thoughts to joyous outpourings of a sincere soul.

"Meditation is the joy of my life now," he said one day. Silent and unostentatious, he was a man of few words and would always be quietly contemplating in the recess of his heart. Even during his visits to the Ashram, the couple of hours that he stayed there, one could observe him quietly occupying a seat in one corner, calm and sedate, resting on his own thoughts, and hardly ever giving himself to any talk unless it was on the reminiscences of Swamiji, which he would narrate with deep feeling and pathos, often moving into tears, or unless at times he had some one of the Swamis to whom he could confide some experience of his life, or from whom he might seek light on some obscure question or problem of his heart, which also invariably bespoke the deeper standards of his thought life.

During these years he had also occasions to meet and sit at the feet of a few of the great and direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, *viz.*, Swami Shivananda, Swami Akhadananda, Swami Vijnanananda and other, and receive instructions from them. They gave lasting impressions on his thoughts and brought hope to his heart.

Since coming into touch with the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, he was an unfailing friend and supporter of all humanitarian activities of the Mission. But his services to the cause of the Bombay Ashram were great as they were opportune and will ever be lovingly and greatly remembered. His benefactions, however, flowed through channels other than the Ramakrishna Mission as well, and we are told that the Parsee Panchayat, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army also had good shares in his charities.

Lately, consequent on old age and high blood pressure, he was often keeping indifferent health, but with all that he would hardly miss a day of his regular visits to the Ramakrishna Ashram at Khar. Only two days prior to his death he was at the Ashram, spending nearly an hour and a half there. On the day of his death at about 6.30 p.m. there was a telephone call at the Ashram informing the Ashram that Mr. Biliomoria was feeling bad and restless. But by the time one of the Swamis could reach his place he was found calmly waiting for the final call. And what a glorious death it was—calm and

restful, eyes closed in meditation and a glow of inner joy radiating on the face, this noble soul breathed his last breath unnoticed of all standing close by, without the slightest twist of a muscle or any mark of agony in his expression. May his soul rest in eternal peace! May God give consolation and endurance to his widow in her great bereavement!

#### Passing Away of Swami Nirbharananda

It is with deep sorrow that we record the passing of Swami Nirbharananda into final Peace in the Master on March 16, 1940. Although his death has occurred slowly, as his physical frame was very much incapacitated by continuous disease, his mind was all along centred in the Master. He retained consciousness even to the last moment and the name of the Master was always on his lips.

Swami Nirbharananda's was a life in which the spirit and ideals of the Elders of the Ramakrishna Order found expression both internally and concretely. For many years he had made the Advaita Ashrama of Benares his abode and chief concern of life. A very large share of the improvements and the ascetic spirit which one sees in that Centre is due in no small degree to the capacity and inspiration of his noble and thoughtful mind. Even when his body was in the grip of insidious disease it was his wont to fix his attention always on divine things, especially the image of the Master installed in the Ashrama Temple. And Sri Visvanatha and the Master were his stay all through. May he ever rest in Peace with the Master!

#### Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday Celebration at Madras

The 105th Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, the Tithipuja falling on the eleventh and public Celebration on the seventeenth of March. Special events of the occasion were elaborate worship with two Homas, Kalipuja, Chant, Devotional songs, distribution of blessed offering among assembled devotees, Harikatha and a crowded public meeting. The meeting was presided over by Sir Sivaswami Iyer and lectures were delivered by Sri K. V. Seshu Iyer, Vidwan K. V.

Jagannatha Iyer and Brahmachari Madhavachaitanya in English, Tamil and Telugu respectively. That Sri Ramakrishna's life and works were accepted by the educated India, that he expounded Hinduism in a manner acceptable to rationalists, that he did not shun society but induced his followers to serve it, that he sought truth from all quarters, that he never desired or assumed leadership of any kind and that he accepted the essence of all religions to be true were points specially emphasised by Sir Sivaswami Iyer. Dr. Tirumurthi proposed the vote of thanks. The decoration was a specially attractive feature of the celebration.

**The Ramakrishna Mission Student's Home, Mylapore, Madras.**

Evidently the Home has become the vital point around which many growing educational activities have rallied. It is with an amount of pride that one watches the considerable amount of good it is rendering. Its potential power for good far exceeds what has already been realised. Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, K.C.S.I. has precisely evaluated the Institution in these words: "The Home seeks to combine the ideal of the Gurukula with that of the English Public School without the defects of either. While it seeks to promote Brahmacharya, it does not segregate students from the rest of the world.....It does not promote the habit of excessive and unbalanced addiction to athletics, but it seeks to promote corporate life in all occupations, amusements and activities and to form the character of the students." And "the pious wish of the management that every institution that is at present linked with the Home must be inspired by the same ideal, and in future many more should spring up in different parts of South India creating a network of Ramakrishna Homes and Schools" will certainly be echoed in the hearts of all to whom education of boys is a dear cause.

We have before us The Thirty-fifth Annual Report setting out clearly all the facts and figures one should like to know regarding the working of the Institution during the year 1939. "Events of the year," "Personnel," "Accommodation," "Admission and strength," "Health," "Sevapravian Samiti," "Tutorial Guidance,"

"Garden work," "Music Class," "Moral and Religious Instruction," "Festivals," "Library and Reading Room," and "Old Boys,"—these are the tell-tale topical headings under which the Home proper is described. The strength of the Home at the beginning of the year was 182 and at the end 181. The High School which is central to the Home has the speciality of being entirely residential, small in its classes and wedded to simplicity in dress and furniture, laboratory plan is teaching several subjects, compulsory course of sanskrit up to Form IV and manual training as an integral part of education right up to Form VI. The Automobile Engineering and Industrial School presented 20 students for the Final Examination and 19 of them received the L.A.E. Diploma.

The High School for boys and girls at Tyagarayanagar had a large increase, the number having reached 2253 during the year. The new building for the High School that is being constructed at a cost of Rs. 1,07,000 is nearing completion. The hostel attached to this School is run on the lines of the Home. The total receipts of the School for the year was Rs. 77,419-3-1 and total expenditure Rs. 75,775-11-2.

The total running expenditure on all the sections of the Home, High School and Industrial School amounted to Rs. 55,708-10-10 and the total receipts to Rs. 44,860-2-0, thus leaving a deficit of Rs. 10,848-8-10 to be met from revenue reserve account. The total of endowment at the end of the year was Rs. 4,67,422-12-10. In addition to the interest from Endowments and Government Grants the management have yet to find Rs. 20,000 annually by way of subscriptions and donations to keep the work going on the existing lines with its schools and hostels.

"One anna will keep the Home for one minute; one hundred rupees will keep it for a day; one boy can be maintained and educated by an annual contribution of Rs. 300 or a permanent fund that will fetch that amount.....The management feels assured that the sympathetic public who have helped to bring the institution to its present condition will not

allow the good work to languish for want of the needed support."

During the year Srimat Swami Virjanandaji Maharaj, the President of Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, initiated the worship in the newly designed Shrine of the Home and laid the foundation stone for the building in which the Mission's Hostel attached to the School at Tyagarayanagar will be housed.

**Sri Ramakrishna Thondar Sangham**

**Report for the Year 1939**

During the year under report the self-sacrificing volunteers of this association formed under the inspiration of the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Madras did service among the poor suburban dwellers of Mylapore for 5144 hours. They conducted Night Schools in depressed areas, encouraged and promoted healthy and cleanly habits, taught the uneducated working class prone to ignorant and harmful living thrift, co-operation and ideas of good living, celebrated several festivals to inspire them with genuine religious feelings, distributed the school necessaries and clothes to children, rendered notable help in directing the traffic during the crowded festivals at Kapaleswaram, managed to feed the poor people on several occasions, conducted Bhajana processions and village cleaning work during the excursions, maintained the Cub, the Scout and the Guide classes, extended the usefulness of the Better living Co-operative Society at Sarada, and extended their activity to a new arca called Kattukkoil. Help in money and by way of a few hour's

voluntary service a week from the educated youngsters could make this noble work a greater boon to the uneducated poor that carry on their dark life behind the City lights.

**The Ramakrishna Mission Institute  
of Culture—A short Account**

of its activities up to December 2, 1939.

Among the aims and objects of this Institute, which arose as a commemoration of the Birth Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, are: 1. To promote, propagate and emphasise Indian Culture in all its aspects by creating facilities for research, publishing pamphlets, periodicals and books holding appreciative and rational discussions, assimilating the essential principles of the different cultures of the world, providing residential hall for guests of other races and nations and helping to build a new personality by stressing the inherent divinity and oneness of humanity. 2. Correspondence with cultural centres in India and abroad, extending cordial hospitality to cultured foreign visitors in order to exchange thoughts, maintenance of a library and Reading-room and a Student's Home, holding regular weekly classes and study circles, and convening meetings and discussions, are also among its activities. Work has been done in all these directions during the period under report. The report gives the details of about 60 speeches made by notable authors, scholars and thinkers of almost all countries of the world. It concludes with an appeal for at least Rs. 50,000 for the erection of a permanent home for the Institute.















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